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THE LIFE

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

BY THOMAS MEDWIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ERRATA.

Page ix., last line, for "conosio" read "*conosco.*"
Page 49, first line, for "Longivus" read "*Longius.*"
Page 58, line 20, for "scattered" read "*shattered.*"
Page 277, lines 10 & 12, omit the parentheses.
Page 278, line 14, for "blesse" read "*blosse.*"
Page 332, line 3, for "affection" read "*affliction.*"
Page 339, line 6, for "Ibycchus" read "*Ibichus.*"

PREFACE.

Twenty-four years have elapsed since Shelley was withdrawn from the world, and no "record" of him "remains," save a few fugitive notices scattered about in periodicals. The Notes, it is true, appended to the last edition of his works, are highly valuable, and full of eloquence and feeling, but they relate rather to the "origin and history" of those works, than of the poet, and date only from 1814; leaving his life up to that period a blank, that imperatively requires to be filled up.

Mrs. Shelley, in January, 1839, says, "this is *not the time to tell the truth*, and I should reject any colouring of the truth," and adds, that "the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far only as he is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction, that were they *judged impartially*, his character would stand fairer and brighter than that of any of his contemporaries."

The long interval which has transpired since the writing of this passage, makes me conclude that the amiable and gifted person who penned it, has abandoned, if she had ever formed, the intention of executing this "labour of love;" and the more so, as in 1824, she points out Leigh Hunt as "the person best calculated for such an undertaking."

"The distinguished friendship that Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which he clings to the memory of his friend," no doubt well qualified him, on those two grounds, for Shelley's biographer; but he doubtless felt that an acquaintance of nine or ten years, most of which were passed by Shelley abroad, furnished him with very inadequate materials.

Sensible how much more fitted he would have been to have performed this office than myself, I should have been happy to have supplied him with data absolutely requisite for tracing Shelley's genius from its first germs up to its maturity, and forming an impartial judgment of his character—data which no one but myself could have supplied, inasmuch as I knew him from childhood—as, we were at school together, continually together during the vacations, corresponded regularly, and although I lost sight of him for a few years when in the East, because our intimacy was renewed on my return; and, more than all, because I passed the two last winters and springs of his existence, one under his roof, and the other with him, without the interruption of a single day.

It may be objected that these memorabilia are imperfect, from the almost total want of letters. Unhappily all those—and they would have formed volumes—which I received from him in early youth, were lost, from my not having the habit, at that time, of preserving letters, and that those which passed between us from 1819 to 1822, were lent, and never returned.

Mrs. Shelley has, in one of the volumes containing her lamented husband's Prose Works, given the world the letters she could collect; but, precious as they are in a literary point of view, particularly those to Mr. Peacock, they throw but little light on his life or pursuits. Those letters also are few in number. After the appearance of the Quarterly Review article, in 1818, many of his friends appear to have fallen off—at least discontinued writing to him, and he limits them to "three or four, or even less."

But are letters the best *media* for developing character? Judging from Byron's, I should certainly answer in the negative. In his epistolary correspondence, a man always adapts his style and sentiments to the capacity and ways of thinking of those with whom the interchange is carried on; besides, that a person must be intimate indeed with another to lay bare his heart to him, to disclose unreservedly what can only be unfoldedin the confidentiality of social intercourse.

It was my determination, on commencing this work, to have differed from all writers of Memoirs, in stating what Shelley's actions and opinions were, and letting the world judge them; but I soon found that such ground was untenable, and was dissatisfied with making myself a mere chronicler; besides that with a knowledge of the motives of his actions, it would have been a gross injustice to have suppressed them. I was strengthened in this resolution by the advice of the author of "Shelley at Oxford," to whom I am much indebted in these pages, who says, "The biographer who would take upon himself the pleasing and instructing, but difficult and delicate task of composing a faithful history of his whole life, will frequently be compelled to discuss the important questions, whether his conduct at certain periods was altogether such as ought to be proposed for imitation; whether he was ever misled by a glowing temperament, something of hastiness in choice, and a certain constitutional impatience; whether, like less gifted mortals, he ever shared in the common feature of mortality, repentance,—and to what extent."

These questions I have fully discussed. How painfully interesting is his Life! With so many weaknesses—with so much to pardon—so much to pity—so much to admire—so much to love—there is no romance, however stirring, that in abler hands might not have paled before it. Such as it is, I throw it on the indulgence of his friends and the public. It has been written with no indecorous haste—by one sensible of the difficulty of the task—of his inadequacy to do it justice—of his unworthiness to touch the hem of Shelley's garment, but not by one unable to appreciate the greatness of his genius, or to estimate the qualities of his heart. I was the first to turn the tide of obloquy, to familiarize the world with traits, that by a glimpse, however slight and fleeting, could not but make a favourable impression, and now elaborate a more finished portrait, reflected in the mirror of memory, which distance renders more distinct and faithful, and in the words of Salvator Rosa, may add,—

> Dica poi quanto sa rancor severo,
> Contra le sue saette ho doppio usbergo,
> Non conosio interesse, e son' sincero.

SONNET

ON SHELLEY.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HERWEGH.

WITH agony of thought, intensely striving
To work out God, his God was doubly dear:
A faith more firm had never poet here,
A brighter pledge of bliss immortal giving:
With all his pulses throbbing for his kind,
Hope steered his course thro' the world's stormy wave
If anger moved, but ruffled his calm mind,
A hatred of the tyrant and the slave.
In form of man a subtle elfin sprite—
From Nature's altar pure a hallowed fire—
A mark for every canting hypocrite—
Yearning for Heaven with all his soul's desire—
Cursed by his father—a fond wife's delight—
Starlike in a wild ocean to expire!

THE AUTHOR.

WRITTEN UNDER DRYDEN'S EPIGRAM:

"Three poets in three different ages born."

Stars of a later age, two poets shine,
And with a radiance scarcely less divine:
This waged with human systems deathless strife,
War with himself consumed the other's life:
One died for Greece, her freedom both had sung,
And perished, as the great should perish, young.

The Author.

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO.

Thou wert a morning-star among the living,
  Ere thy fair light was fled;
Now having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
  New splendour to the dead.

SHELLEY.

Tu vivens, vivis, fers lucem, ut stella diei,
Ast nunc, heu! moriens, Hesperus, Aster eris.

THE AUTHOR.

THE LIFE

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

SUSSEX boasts of two great poets, Collins and Otway—it may pride itself on a third and a greater. Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place, on the 4th of August, 1792. His sirname of Percy being derived from an aunt, who was distantly connected with the Northumberland family, and that of Bysshe from the heiress of Fen Place, through whom that portion of the estate was derived.

The family of Shelly, Shellie, or Shelley, as the name has been spelt at different epochs, is of great antiquity in the above county, and is descended from Sir William, Lord of Affendary, brother of Sir Thomas Shelly, a faithful adherent of King Richard the Second, who was attainted and executed by Henry IV. Without tracing the pedigree, and referring those interested in such matters to the Peerage, under the head of "De Lisle and Dudley," I will only say, that Sir John Shelley, of Maresfield Park, who dated his Baronetage from the earliest creation of that title, in 1611, had, besides other issue, two sons, Sir William, a judge of the Common-pleas, and Edward; from the latter of whom, in the seventh descent, sprung Timothy, who had also two sons, and settled—having married an American lady—at Christ's Church, Newark, in North America; where Bysshe was born, on the 21st June, 1731.

As often happens to the junior branches of houses, he began life with few of the goods of fortune, and little chance of worldly aggrandisement. America was then the land of promise; but it was *only* such to him. He there exercised the profession of a Quack doctor, and married, as it is said, the widow of a miller, but for this I cannot vouch.

To a good name, and a remarkably handsome person, he united the most polished manners and address, and it is little to be wondered at that these, in addition to the *prestige* that never fails to attach itself to a travelled man, should have captivated the great heiress of Horsham, the only daughter and heiress of the Rev. Theobald Michell. The guardian (the young lady was an orphan and a minor) put his *veto* on the match, but, like a new Desdemona, Miss Michell was not to be deterred by interdictions, and eloped with Mr. Shelley to London, where the fugitives were wedded in that convenient asylum for lovers, the Fleet, by the Fleet parson, and lost no time in repairing to Paris. There the lady was attacked, on her arrival, with the small-pox, and her life despaired of; and which circumstance, had it occurred, by a freak of fortune, would have made my mother heiress to the estates.

After his wife's death, an insatiate fortune-hunter, he laid siege to a second heiress in an adjoining county. In order to become acquainted with her, he took up his abode for some time in a small inn on the verge of the Park at Penshurst, a mansion consecrated by the loves of Waller and Sacarissa, (whose oak is still an object of veneration,) and honoured by the praises of Ben Jonson.

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
Or touch, of marble ; nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold ;
Thou hast no lantern whereof tales are told ;
Or stair or courts, but stand'st an ancient pile ;
And these, grudged at, are reverenced the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water ; therein art thou fair.
Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport,
Thy mount, to which the Dryads do resort,
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,
Beneath the broad beech, and the chesnut shade,
That taller tree, which of a nut was set,
At his great birth, where all the muses met :
There in the withered bark are cut the names
Of many a Sylvan, taken with his flames,
And thence the ruddy Satyrs oft provoke
The lighter Fauns to reach the " Lady's Oak ;
Thy copse, too, named of Gamage, thou hast there,

That never fails to serve the seasoned deer,
When thou wouldst feast, or exercise thy friends
The lower land, that to the river bends,
Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine and calves do feed
The middle ground, thy mares and horses breed.
Each bank doth yield thee conies, and the tops,
Fertile of wood, Ashore and Sydney copse,
To crown thy open table doth provide,
The purple pheasant with the speckled side.

It might well have excited the ambition of Mr. Shelley to become the proprietor of that historical mansion, so often embellished by the Court of Queen Elizabeth, and the presence of Lord Leicester, the nephew of the great Sir Philip Sidney, "a man without spot," as Shelley calls him in his Adonais, the patron and friend of Spencer, who so pathetically laments his death, and where the Arcadia (according to family tradition) was partly written; but he was little alive to these influences, and aimed at the hand of Miss Sidney Perry, not as the last scion of the house of Sidney, but as the largest fortune in Kent. He succeeded so well in ingratiating himself with this lady, that she also eloped with him to London, where they were married at St. James's, Westminster. John Sidney, afterwards Sir John Sidney Shelley, and who has now dropped the name of Shelley, was one of the fruits of this marriage, and in the person of his son, was revived the family title of De Lisle, soon after his marriage with Lady Sophia Fitzclarence, the natural daughter of William the Fourth.

It is worthy of remark, that the patent for his being created Lord Leicester, had been drawn up, but not signed by his late Majesty, and somewhat singular that that title should, in the face of it, have been conferred by the Whigs, for political services, on one who had not only no claim to it, but whose ancestor was the cold-blooded, and times-serving, and foul-mouthed, Lawyer Coke.

As I shall not have occasion further to allude to this branch of the family, I will remark here, that if Percy Bysshe Shelley was proud of anything, it was of his connection with the Sidneys, and that when Sir John, on his eldest son Philip's coming of age, resettled the estate, he offered Percy Bysshe £3000 to renounce his contingency, but which, distressed as he was for money, he refused.

On the 3rd March, 1806, Bysshe, the grandfather, was raised to the baronetage. He owed this distinction, if such it be, to Charles, Duke of Norfolk, who wished thereby to win over to his party the Shelley interest in the western part of the county of Sussex and the Rape of Bramber, not to mention Horsham, on which he had at this period electioneering designs.

I remember Sir Bysshe well in a very advanced age, a remarkably handsome man, fully six feet in height, and with a noble and aristocratic bearing. *Nil fuit unquam sic impar sibi.* His manner of life was most eccentric, for he used to frequent daily the tap-room of one of the low inns in Horsham, and there drank with some of the lowest citizens, a habit he had probably acquired in the new world. Though he had built a castle, (Goring Castle) that cost him upwards of £80,000, he passed the last twenty or thirty years of his existence in a small cottage, looking on the river Arun, at Horsham, in which all was mean and beggarly—the existence, indeed, of a miser—enriching his legatees at the expense of one of his sons, by buying up his post-obits.

In order to dispose of him, I will add that his *affectionate* son Timothy, received every morning a bulletin of his health, till he became one of the oldest heir-apparents in England, and began to think his father immortal. God takes those to him, who are worth taking, early, and drains to the last sands in the glass, the hours of the worthless and immoral, in order that they may reform their ways. But his were unredeemed by one good action. Two of his daughters by the second marriage led so miserable a life under his roof, that they eloped from him; a consummation he devoutly wished, as he thereby found an excuse for giving them no dowries; and though they were married to two highly respectable men, and one had a numerous family, he made no mention of either of them in his will.

Shelley seems to have had him in his mind when he says:—

He died—
He was bowed and bent with fears:
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,
Which like fierce fever, left him weak,
And his straight lip and bloated cheek
Were wrapt in spasms by hollow sneers;
And selfish cares, with barren plough,
Not age, had lined his narrow brow;
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed
Upon the withered life within,
Like vipers upon some poisonous weed.
Rosalind and Helen, p. 209.

Yes, he died at last, and in his room were found bank notes to the amount of £10,000, some in the leaves of the few books he possessed, others in the folds of his sofa, or sewn into the lining of his dressing gown. But "*Ohe! jam satis.*"

Timothy Shelley, his eldest son, and heir to the Shelley and Michell estates, whose early education was much neglected, and who had originally been designed to be sent to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, which the great Sir Philip Sidney founded—and to which his descendant, and Timothy's half-brother, Sir John, nominates the Master, President, or whatever the head of the College may be called, entered himself at University College, Oxford, and after the usual routine of academical studies, by which he little profited, made *The Grand Tour.* He was one of those travellers, who, with so much waste of time, travel for the sake of saying they have travelled; and, after making the circuit of Europe, return home, knowing no more of the countries they have visited than the trunks attached to their carriages. All, indeed, that he did bring back with him was a smattering of French, and a bad picture of an Eruption of Vesuvius, if we except a certain *air*, miscalled that of the old school, which he could put off and on, as occasion served.

He was a disciple of Chesterfield and La Rochefaucauld, reducing all politeness to forms, and moral virtue to expediency; as an instance of which, he once told his son, Percy Bysshe, in my presence, that he would provide for as many natural children as he chose to get, but that he would never forgive his making a *mesalliance;* a sentiment which excited in Shelley anything but respect for his sire.

This anecdote proves that the moral sense in Sir Timothy was obtuse; indeed, his religious opinions were also very lax; although he occasionally went to the parish church, and made his servants regularly attend divine service, he possessed no true devotion himself, and inculcated none to his son and heir, so that much of Percy Bysshe's scepticism may be traced to early example, if not to precept. But I anticipate. Before Sir Timothy, then Mr. Shelley, set out on his European tour, he had engaged himself to Miss Pilfold, (daughter of Charles Pilfold, Esq., of Effingham Place), who had been brought up by her aunt, Lady Ferdinand Pool, the wife of the well-known father of the turf, and owner of "Potoooooooo," and the equally celebrated "Waxy" and "Mealy."

It may not be irrelevant to mention that Miss Michell, Sir Bysshe's first wife, was my grandfather's first cousin; and that my mother bore the same degree of consanguinity to Miss Pilfold; their fathers being brothers; which circumstances I mention in order to account for the intimacy of our families, and mine with Bysshe, as he was always called. Among the letters of an aunt of mine, was found one [*See Appendix No.* 1] from him, written in his eleventh year, and which I give entire, not so much on account of its merit, or as a literary curiosity, but to show the early regard he entertained for me, the playfulness of his character as a boy, and the dry humour of franking the letter, his father then being member of Parliament for the Rape of Bramber; nor is it less valuable to show his early fondness for a boat.

He was most engaging and amiable as a child; such as he, afterwards thinking perhaps of himself, describes:—

He was a gentle boy,
And in all gentle sports took joy;
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,
With a small feather for a sail,
His fancy on that spring would float,
If some invisible breeze might stir
Its marble calm.—*Rosalind and Helen.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley was brought up in retirement at Field Place, and received the same education as his elder sisters, being instructed in the rudiments of Latin and Greek by Mr. Edwards, the clergyman of Warnham, (the parish in which they lived), a good old man, but of very limited intellects, and whose preaching might have been edifying if his Welch pronunciation had made it intelligible; at all events, his performance of the service was little calculated to inspire devotion. At ten years of age he was sent to Sion House, Brentford, where I had preceded him. This school, though not a "Dotheboys-hall," was conducted with the greatest regard to economy. A slice of bread with an "*idée*" of butter smeared on the surface, and "thrice skimmed skyblue," to use an expression of Bloomfield the poet, was miscalled a breakfast. The supper, a repetition of the same frugal repast; and the dinner, at which it was never allowed to send up the plate twice without its eliciting an observation from the distributor, that effectually prevented a repetition of the offence, was made up generally of ingredients that were *anonymous*. The Saturday's meal, a sort of pie, a collect from the plates during the week. This fare, to a boy accustomed to the delicacies of the table, was not the most attractive; the whole establishment was in keeping with the dietry part of it, and the system of the *lavations* truly Scotch.

The lady of the house was by no means a Mrs. Squeers—I do not remember seeing her five times whilst I was at the seminary of learning,—she was too *fine* to have anything to do with all the dirty details of the household; she was, or was said to be, connected with the Duke of Argyle— I never knew one of the Scottish nation who did not claim relationship, or clanship, with the noble duke. She was given out for a sprig of nobility at any rate; another sister, an old maid, the factotum of the establishment, was an economist of the first order.

Exchanging for the caresses of his sisters an association with boys, mostly the sons of London shopkeepers, of rude habits and coarse manners, who made game of his girlishness, and despised him because he was not "one of them;" not disposed to enter into their sports, to wrangle, or fight; confined between four stone walls, in a playground of very limited dimensions—a few hundred yards—(with a single tree in it, and that the Bell tree, so called from its having suspended in its branches, the odious bell whose din, when I think of it, yet jars my ears,) instead of breathing the pure air of his native fields, and rambling about the plantations and flower gardens of his father's country seat—the sufferings he underwent at his first outset in this little world were most acute.

Sion House was indeed a perfect hell to him.

Fagging, that vestige of barbarous times, in the positive sense of the word, as adopted in public schools, was not in strict use; that is, the boys of the higher classes had not expressly chosen and particular *slaves* ; but perhaps there was in operation here, another and a worse form of government—a democracy of tyrants—instead of the rule of a few petty sovereigns; and although here the elder boys did not oblige their juniors to perform for them offices the most menial, to clean their coats and shoes, they forced them to bowl to them at cricket, and run after their balls until they were ready to drop with fatigue—to go out of bounds for them to the circulating library, or purchase with dictionaries and other books sold by weight to the grocer, bread and cheese to stay their cravings of hunger, and to receive the punishment of the transgression, if caught in the fact. And more than one of these petty despots (there were young men at the school of seventeen or eighteen) used to vent on his victims his ill-humours in harsh words, sometimes in blows. Poor Shelley! he was always the martyr, and it was under the smart of this oppression that he wrote:—

> There rose
> From the near school-room, voices, that alas!
> Were but one echo from a world of woes,
> The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.
> *Revolt of Islam.*

And again:—

> Day after day—week after week—
> I walked about like a thing alive—
> Alas! dear friend! you must believe
> The heart is stone—it did not break.
> *Rosalind and Helen.*

We were about sixty school-fellows. I well remember the day when he was added to the number. A new arrival is always a great excitement to the other boys, who pounce upon a *fresh man* with the boldness of birds of prey. We all had had to pass through this ordeal, and the remembrance of it gave my companions a zest for torture. All tormented him with questionings. There was no end to their mockery, when they found that he was ignorant of pegtop or marbles, or leap-frog, or hopscotch, much more of fives and cricket. One wanted him to spar, another to run a race with him. He was a tyro in both these accomplishments, and the only welcome of the Neophyte was a general shout of derision. To all these impertinences he made no reply, but with a look of disdain written in his countenance, turned his back on his new associates, and when he was alone, found relief in tears.

Shelley was at this time tall for his age, slightly and delicately built, and rather narrow chested, with a complexion fair and ruddy, a face rather long than oval. His features, not regularly handsome, were set off by a profusion of silky brown hair, that curled naturally. The expression of countenance was one of exceeding sweetness and innocence. His blue eyes were very large and prominent, considered by phrenologists to indicate a great aptitude for verbal memory. They were at times, when he was abstracted, as he often was in contemplation, dull, and, as it were, insensible to external objects; at others they flashed with the fire of intelligence. His voice was soft and low, but broken in its tones,—when anything much interested him, harsh and immodulated; and this peculiarity he never lost. As is recorded of Thomson, he was naturally calm, but when he heard of or read of some flagrant act of injustice, oppression, or cruelty, then indeed the sharpest marks of horror and indignation were visible in his countenance.

I have said that he was delicately framed, and it has been remarked, "that it is often noticed in those of very fine and susceptible genius. That mysterious influence, which the mind exercises over the body, seeming to prevent the growth of physical strength, when the intellect is kept ever alive, and the spirits continually are agitated."

"As his port had the meekness of a maiden, the heart of the young virgin who had never crossed her father's threshold to encounter the rude world, could not be more susceptible of all the sweet charities than his. In this respect Shelley's disposition would happily illustrate the innocence and virginity of the Muses. He possessed a most affectionate regard for his relations, and particularly for the females of his family. It was not without manifest joy that he received a letter from his mother and sisters,"—for the two eldest he had an especial fondness, and I will here observe that one, unhappily removed from the world before her time, possessed a talent for oil-painting that few artists have acquired, and that the other bore a striking resemblance in her beauty and amiability, to his cousin, Harriet Grove, of whom I shall have to speak. Mr. Hogg mentions, on the occasion of Shelley's seeing the attachment and tenderness of two sisters at Oxford, his feelings regarding the sisterly affections, and says he seems to have had his own in his eye. He on this occasion described their appearance, and drew a lovely picture of this amiable and innocent attachment; the dutiful regard of the younger, which partook, in some degree, of filial reverence; but, as more facile and familiar, and of the protecting, instinctively hoping fondness of the elder, that resembled maternal tenderness, but with less of reserve and more of sympathy.

As a proof of his great sweetness of disposition and feeling for others, I will cite an example of which I was an eye-witness. His sisters, on the occasion of a visit with himself to a young lady of their own age, and a near relation, who was shy, reserved, and awkward, behaved to her as he considered rudely, at which Shelley was much hurt, endeavoured to soothe her, and severely reprimanded his sisters, and persuaded his father, on his return home, to call and make apology for them.

Such was Shelley when noviciated at Sion House Academy. Our master, a Scotch doctor of law, and a divine, was a choleric man, of a sanguinary complexion, in a green old age; not wanting in good qualities, but very capricious in his temper, which, good or bad, was influenced by the daily occurrences of a domestic life, not the most harmonious, and of which his face was the barometer, and his hand the index. He was a tolerable Greek and Latin scholar: Homer, his *cheval de bataille.* He could construe fluently, in his own way, some plays of Æschylus—Schultz being his oracle—and several of those of Sophocles and Euripides, looking upon the text as immaculate, never sticking fast at any of its corruptions, but driving straight forwards, in defiance of obstacles. The brick wall of no chorus ever made him pull up. In reading the historians, he troubled himself as little with digressions or explanations of the habits and customs of the ancients, or maps. His Latin verses were certainly *original*, but neither Virgilian nor Ovidian, for I remember an inscription of his on a Scotch mull, which had been presented to him (he took an inordinate quantity of Scotch snuff) by one of his pupils, it ran thus:—Snuff-box loquitur:—

"Me, Carolus Mackintosh, de dono, dedit, alumnus,
Prœceptor, prœsensu, accipit atque tenet."

Shelley certainly imbibed no love of the classics, much as he afterwards cultivated them, from this *Dominie.* The dead languages were to him as bitter a pill as they had been to Byron, but he acquired them, as it were intuitively, and seemingly without study, for during school-hours he was wont to gaze at the passing clouds, —all that could be seen from the lofty windows which his desk fronted—or watch the swallows as they flitted past, with longing for their wings; or would scrawl in his school-books—a habit he always continued—rude drawings of pines and cedars, in memory of those on the lawn of his native home. On these occasions, our master would sometimes peep over his shoulder, and greet his ears with no pleasing salutation.

Our pedagogue, when he was in one of his good humours, dealt also in what he called *facetiæ*, and when we came to the imprisonment of the winds in the Cave of Eolus, as described in the Æneid, used, to the merriment of the school, who enjoyed the joke much, to indulge in Cotton's parody on the passage, prefacing it with an observation, that his father never forgave him for the Travestie—a punishment richly merited, and which ought to have been visited on the joker by his other pupils as it was by Shelley, who afterwards expressed to me his disgust at this bad taste, for he never could endure obscenity in any form.

A scene, that to poor Shelley, who instead of laughing had made a face at the silly attempt at wit, and which his preceptor had probably observed, has often recurred to me. A few days after this, he had a theme set him for two Latin lines on the subject of *Tempestas*. He came to me to assist him in the task. I had got a cribbing book, and of which I made great use—Ovid's *Tristibus*. I knew that the only work of Ovid with which the doctor was acquainted was the Metamorphoses, the only one, indeed, read in that and other seminaries of learning, and by what I thought great good luck, happened to stumble on two lines exactly applicable to the purpose. The hexameter I forget, but the pentameter ran thus:—

Jam jam tacturos sidera celsa putes.

When Shelley's turn came to carry up his exercise, my eyes were turned on the *Dominie.* There was a *peculiar* expression in his features, which, like the lightning before the storm, portended what was coming. The spectacles, generally lifted above his dark and bushy brows, were lowered to their proper position, and their lenses had no sooner caught the said hexameter and pentameter than he read with a loud voice the stolen line, laying a sarcastic emphasis on every word, and suiting the action to the word by boxes on each side of Shelley's ears. Then came the comment, "'*Jam jam,*'—Pooh, pooh, boy! raspberry jam! Do you think you are at your mother's?" Here a burst of laughter echoed through the listening benches. "Don't you know that I have a sovereign objection to those two monosyllables, with which schoolboys cram their verses? haven't I told you so a hundred times already? '*Tacturos sidera celsa putes*,'—what, do the waves on the coast of Sussex strike the stars, eh?—'*celsa sidera*,'—who does not know that the stars are high? Where did you find that epithet?—in your Gradus ad Parnassum, I suppose. You will never mount so high;" (another box on the ears, which nearly felled him to the ground)—"*putes*! you may think this very fine, but to me it is all balderdash, hyperbolical stuff;" (another cuff) after which he tore up the verses, and said in a fury, "There, go now, sir, and see if you can't write something better."

Poor Shelley! I had been the cause of his misfortune — of what affected him more than this unjust punishment—the ridicule of the whole school; and I was half inclined to have opened my desk, and produced, to the shame of the ignorant pedagogue, the original line of the great Latin poet, which this Crispinus had so savagely abused, but terror, a persuasion that his penance would be light compared to mine, soon repressed the impulse.

Youthful feelings are not deep, but the impression of this scene long left a sting behind it; perhaps Shelley, in brooding over the prediction as to his incapacity for writing Latin verses, then resolved to falsify it, for he afterwards, as will appear by two specimens which I give in their proper place, became a great proficient in the art.

He passed among his schoolfellows as a strange and unsocial being, for when a holiday relieved us from our tasks, and the other boys were engaged in such sports as the narrow limits of our prison-court allowed, Shelley, who entered into none of them, would pace backwards and forwards—I think I see him now—along the southern wall, indulging in various vague and undefined ideas, the chaotic elements, if I may say so, of what afterwards produced so beautiful a world. I very early learned to penetrate into this soul sublime—why may I not say divine, for what is there that comes nearer to God than genius in the heart of a child? I, too, was the only one at the school with whom he could communicate his sufferings, or exchange ideas: I was, indeed, some years his senior, and he was grateful to me for so often singling him out for a companion; for it is well known that it is considered in some degree a *condescension* for boys to make intimates of those in a lower form than themselves. Then we used to walk together up and down his favourite spot, and there he would outpour his sorrows to me, with observations far beyond his years, and which, according to his after ideas, seemed to have sprung from an antenatal life. I have often thought that he had these walks of ours in mind, when, in describing an antique group, he says, "Look, the figures are walking with a sauntering and idle pace, and talking to each other as they walk, as you may have seen a younger and an elder boy at school, walking in some grassy spot of the play-ground, with that tender friendship for each other which the age inspires." If Shelley abominated one task more than another it was a dancing lesson. At a Ball at Willis's rooms, where, among other pupils of Sala, I made one, an aunt of mine, to whom the

Letter No. 1, in the Appendix, was addressed, asked the dancing master why Bysshe was not present, to which he replied in his broken English, "Mon Dieu, madam, what should he do here? Master Shelley will not learn any ting—he is so *gauche*." In fact, he contrived to abscond as often as possible from the dancing lessons, and when forced to attend, suffered inexpressibly.

Half-year after half-year passed away, and in spite of his seeming neglect of his tasks, he soon surpassed all his competitors, for his memory was so tenacious that he never forgot a word once turned up in his dictionary. He was very fond of reading, and greedily devoured all the books which were brought to school after the holidays; these were mostly *blue* books. Who does not know what blue books mean? but if there should be any one ignorant enough not to know what those dear darling volumes, so designated from their covers, contain, be it known, that they are or were to be bought for sixpence, and embodied stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages—a most exciting and interesting sort of food for boys' minds; among those of a larger calibre was one which I have never seen since, but which I still remember with a *recouchè* delight. It was "Peter Wilkins." How much Shelley wished for a winged wife and little winged cherubs of children!

But this stock was very soon exhausted. As there was no school library, we soon resorted, "under the rose," to a low circulating one in the town (Brentford), and here the treasures at first seemed inexhaustible. Novels at this time, (I speak of 1803) in three goodly volumes, such as we owe to the great Wizard of the North, were unknown. Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, formed the staple of the collection. But these authors were little to Shelley's taste. Anne Ratcliffe's works pleased him most, particularly the Italian, but the Rosa-Matilda school, especially a strange, wild romance, entitled "Zofloya, or the Moor," a Monk-Lewisy production, where his Satanic Majesty, as in Faust, plays the chief part, enraptured him. The two novels he afterwards wrote, entitled " Zastrozzi" and the " Rosicrucian," were modelled after this ghastly production, all of which I now remember, is, that the principal character is an incarnatian of the devil, but who, unlike the Monk, (then a prohibited book, but afterwards an especial favourite with Shelley) instead of tempting a man and turning him into a likeness of himself, enters into a woman called Olympia, who poisons her husband homœopathically, and ends by being carried off very melodramatically in blue flames to the place of dolor.

" Accursed," said Schiller, " the folly of our nurses, who distort the imagination with frightful ghost stories, and impress ghastly pictures of executions on our weak brains, so that involuntary shudderings seize the limbs of a man, making them rattle in frosty agony," &c. " But who knows," he adds, " if these traces of early education be ineffaceable in us?" Schiller was, however, himself much addicted to this sort of reading. It is said of Collins that he employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction and subjects of fancy, and by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was universally delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular tradition. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens. Milton, too, in early life, lived in a similar dream-land, was fond of high romance and gothic diableries; and it would seem that such contemplations furnish a fit *pabulum* for the development of poetical genius.

This constant dwelling on the marvellous, had considerable influence on Shelley's imagination, nor is it to be wondered, that at that age he entertained a belief in apparitions, and the power of evoking them, to which he alludes frequently in his afterworks, as in Alastor:

> By forcing some lone ghost,
> My messenger, to render up the tale
> Of what we are;

and in an earlier effusion :

Oh, there are genii of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees ;

and again in the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty :

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead,
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed—
I was not heard—I saw them not.

After supping on the horrors of the Minerva press, he was subject to strange, and sometimes frightful dreams, and was haunted by apparitions that bore all the semblance of reality. We did not sleep in the same dormitory, but I shall never forget one moonlight night seeing Shelley walk into my room. He was in a state of somnambulism. His eyes were open, and he advanced with slow steps to the window, which, it being the height of summer, was open. I got out of bed, seized him with my arm, and waked him—I was not then aware of the danger of suddenly rousing the sleep-walker. He was excessively agitated, and after leading him back with some difficulty to his couch, I sat by him for some time, a witness to the severe erethism of his nerves, which the sudden shock produced.

This was the only occasion, however, to my knowledge, that a similar event occurred at school, but I remember that he was severely punished for this involuntary transgression. If, however, he ceased at that time to somnambulize, he was given to waking dreams, a sort of lethargy and abstraction that became habitual to him, and after the *accès* was over, his eyes flashed, his lips quivered, his voice was tremulous with emotion, a sort of ecstacy came over him, and he talked more like a spirit or an angel than a human being.

The second or third year after Shelley's domicile at Sion House, Walker gave a course of lectures in the great room at the academy, and displayed his Orrery. This exhibition opened to Shelley a new universe of speculations; he was, till then, quite ignorant of astronomy; looking upon the stars as so many lights in heaven, as flowers on the earth, sent for our mere gratification and enjoyment; but if he was astonished at the calculations of the mathematician, and the unfolding of our System, he was still more delighted at the idea of a plurality of worlds. Saturn, which was then visible, and which we afterwards looked at through a telescope, particularly interested him, its atmosphere seeming to him an irrefragable proof of its being inhabited like our globe. He dilated on some planets being more favoured than ourselves, and was enchanted with the idea that we should, as spirits, make the grand tour through the heavens,—perhaps, to use the words of Jean Paul Richter, "that as boys are advanced and promoted from one class to another, we should rise to a progressive state from planet to planet, till we became Gods." But if his mind was thus opened, he was not less charmed at the chemical experiments, particularly with the fact that earth, air, and water are not simple elements. This course of lectures ended with the solar microscope, which, whilst it excited *his* curiosity, constituted to most of us little spectators the most attractive part of the exhibition. The mites in cheese, where the whole active population was in motion—the wing of a fly—the vermicular *animalculæ* in vinegar, and other minute creations still smaller, and even invisible to the naked eye, formed afterwards the subjects of many of our conversations; and that he had not forgotten the subject is proved by his making a solar microscope his constant companion, and an anecdote is told in reference to it, which places in a strong light his active benevolence:—"We were crossing the New Road," says Mr. Hogg, "when he said sharply, 'I must call for a moment, but it will not be out of the way at all,' and then dragged me suddenly towards the left. I enquired whither are we bound, and I believe I suggested the postponement of the intended visit till to-morrow. He answered that it was not at all out of our way. I was hurried along rapidly towards the left; we soon fell into an animated discussion respecting the nature of the virtue of the Romans, which in some measure beguiled the weary way. Whilst he was talking with much vehemence, and a total disregard of the people who thronged the streets, he suddenly wheeled about, and pushed me through a narrow door; to my infinite surprise I found myself in a pawnbroker's shop. It was in the neighbourhood of Newgate street, for he had no idea whatever, in practice, either of time or space, nor did he in any degree regard method in the conduct of business. There were several women in the shop in brown and grey cloaks, with squalling children, some of them were attempting to persuade the children to be quiet, or, at least, to scream with moderation; others were enlarging and pointing out the beauties of certain coarse and dirty sheets that lay before them, to a man on the other side of the counter. I bore this substitute for our proposed tea for some minutes with great patience, but, as the call did not promise to terminate speedily, I said to Shelley in a whisper, 'Is not this almost as bad as the Roman virtue?' Upon this he approached the pawnbroker: it was long before he obtained a hearing, and he did not find civility; the man was unwilling to part with a valuable pledge so soon, or perhaps he hoped to retain it eventually, or it might be the obliquity of his nature disqualified him for respectful behaviour. A pawnbroker is frequently an important witness in criminal proceedings; it has happened to me, therefore, to see many specimens of this kind of banker; they sometimes appeared not less respectable than other tradesmen—and sometimes I have been forcibly reminded of the first I ever met with by an equally ill-conditioned fellow. I was so little pleased with the introduction, that I stood aloof in the shop, and did not hear what passed between him and Shelley. On our way to Covent Garden, I expressed my surprise and dissatisfaction at our strange visit, and I learned that when he came to London before, in the course of the summer, some old man had related to him a tale of distress—of a calamity which could only be alleviated by the timely application of ten pounds; five of them he drew from his pocket, and to raise the other five he had pawned his beautiful solar microscope! He related this act of beneficence simply and briefly as if it were a matter of course, and such indeed it was to him. I was ashamed of my impatience, and we strode along in silence.

"It was past ten when we reached the hotel, some excellent tea and a liberal supply of hot muffins in the coffee-room, now quiet and solitary, were the more grateful after the wearisome delay and vast deviation. Shelley often turned his head, and cast eager glances towards the door; and whenever the waiter replenished our teapot, or approached our box, he was interrogated whether any one had called. At last the desired summons was brought; Shelley drew forth some bank notes, hurried to the bar, and returned as hastily, bearing in triumph under his arm a mahogany box, followed by the officious waiter, with whose assistance he placed it upon the bench by his side. He viewed it often with evident satisfaction, and sometimes patted it affectionately in the course of calm conversation. The solar microscope was always a favourite plaything, or instrument of scientific inquiry; whenever he entered a house his first care was to choose some window of a southern aspect, and if permission could be obtained by prayer or purchase, straightway cut a hole through the shutter to receive it. His regard for the solar microscope was as lasting as it was strong; for he retained it several years after this adventure, and long after he had parted with all the rest of his philosophical apparatus."

But to return to Zion House, and perhaps I have dwelt long enough on the first epoch of the life of the Poet. I was removed to a public school, with only one regret—to part from him; and Shelley shortly afterwards was sent to Eton. So much did we mutually hate Sion House, that we never alluded to it in after life; nor shall I have much to say about Eton. The *pure* system of fagging was here, as it still is, carried on in all its rankness; and, as it is the maxim of jurisprudence, that custom makes law—that tradition stands in the place of, and has the force of law—has continued to defy all attempts to put it down. By the way, in one of the military colleges, hardly a year ago, a young man was rolled up in a snow-ball, and left in his room during the time the other cadets were at church. The consequence was, that though restored to animation, he still is, and is likely to ramain all his life, a cripple. The authorities, to whom an appeal was made against this barbarous treatment, refused to interfere. Shelley, Mrs. Shelley says, "refusing to fag at Eton, was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys. This roused, instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience, when it was enforced by menaces and punishment."

"To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them, collected together in societies, where one egged on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he felt to individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their prowess and virtue, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions."

That the masters would not listen to his complaints, if he made any, I readily believe; and the senior boys no doubt resented, as contumacy, and infringement of their rights, Shelley's solitary resistance to them, and visited him with condign punishment. It has been said that he headed a conspiracy against this odious and degrading custom, but I have enquired of some Etonians, his contemporaries, and find that there is no foundation for the report. Indeed, what could a conspiracy of the junior boys, however extensive, effect by numbers against a body so much their superiors in age and physical force?

Tyranny produces tyranny, in common minds; and it is well known in schools, that those boys who have been the most fagged, become the greatest oppressors; not so Shelley: he says:—

And then I clasped my hands, and looked around,
But none was near to mark my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground;
So without shame I spake—" I will be wise
And just and free—and mild—if in me lies
Such power: for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize,
Without reproach or check.

Revolt of Islam.

The boy, so delicately organized, with so nervous a temperament, under the influence of a chronic melancholy, whose genius was a sort of malady; this child, so strong and yet so feeble, suffered in every way. Like the martyrs, who smiled in the midst of torture, he sought refuge in his own thoughts, in the heaven of his own soul, and perhaps this inward life aided him in his search after those mysteries to which he afterwards clung with a faith so unshaken.

It is well known how few boys profit much by these great public schools, especially by Eton, the most aristocratic of them all. He says—

> Nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
> I cared to learn.

But an exception to these, Mrs. Shelley says, was one of the masters, Dr. Lind, whom he had in mind, in the old man who liberates Laon from his tower in the revolt of Islam, (and she might have added the Hermit in Prince Athanase,) who befriended and supported him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration, and with whom Shelley says he read the Symposium.

> Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
>   Lingered, like moonlight in the moonless East,
> For we had just then read—thy memory
>   Is faithful now—the story of *the Feast*.
>
> *Prince Athanase.*

But though he did not distinguish himself highly at Eton, owing perhaps to his want of emulation, and ambition of shining above his fellows in the class; he passed through the school with credit. He had been so well grounded in the classics, that it required little labour for him to get up his daily lessons. With these, indeed, he often went before his master unprepared, his out-of-school hours being occupied with other studies.

Stories are told of his chemical mishaps.—I have before me two notes from his father to mine, written in 1808. Shelley had sent for some book on chemistry, which happened to be in my father's library, but which fell into the hands of his tutor and was sent back. Sir Timothy Shelley says —"*I have returned the book on chemistry, as it is a forbidden thing at Eton!*" Might not this extraordinary prohibition have the more stimulated Shelley to engage in the pursuit?

He made himself a tolerable French scholar, and during the last year worked hard at German, that most difficult of modern, I might say of all tongues, and in which, with his astonishing verbal memory, he soon made great advances.

The author of the papers entitled "P. B. Shelley at Oxford," says, that on visiting him "he was writing the usual exercise, which is presented once a week—a Latin translation of a paper in the *Spectator;* he soon finished it, and as he held it before the fire to dry, I offered to take it from him; he said it was not worth looking at, but I persisted, through a certain scholastic curiosity, to examine the Latinity of my new acquaintance. He gave it me. The Latin was sufficiently correct, but the version was paraphrastic; which I observed; he assented, and said it would pass muster, and he felt no interest in such efforts, and no desire to excel in them. I also noticed many portions of heroic verse, and several entire verses, and these I pointed out as defects in a prose composition. He smiled archly, and added in his peculiar whisper: 'Do you think they will observe them?' I inserted them intentionally, to try their ears. I once showed up a theme at Eton, to old Keate, in which there were a great many verses, but he observed them, scanned them, and asked why I had introduced them—I answered that I did not know they were there—this was partly true and partly false, and he believed me, and immediately applied to me a line in which Ovid says of himself:

Et quid tentabam dicere, versus erat.

Shelley then spoke of the facility with which he composed Latin verses, and taking the paper out of my hand, he began to put the entire translation into verse. He would sometimes open at hazard a prose writer, as Livy or Sallust, and by changing the position of the words, and occasionally substituting others, he would transmute several sentences from prose to verse, to heroic, or more commonly elegiac verse, for he was particularly charmed with the graceful and easy flow of the latter, with surprising rapidity and readiness." That he had certainly arrived at great skill in the art of versification, I think I shall be able to prove by the following specimens I kept among my treasures, which he gave me in 1808 or 9. The first is the Epitaph in Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard, probably a school task.

EPITAPHIUM.

Hic, sinu fessum caput, hospitali,
Cespitis, dormit juvenis, nec illi
Fata ridebant, popularis ille
Nescius auræ.

Musa non vultu, genus, arroganti,
Rusticâ natum grege despicata,
Et suum, tristis, puerum, notavit
Sollicitudo.

Indoles illi bene larga, pectus
Veritas sedem sibi vindicavit,
Et pari, tantis meritis, beavit
Munere, cœlum.

Omne, quod mæstis habuit, miserto
Corde, largivit lacrymam, recepit,
Omne, quod Cælo voluit, fidelis
Pectus amici.

Longivus, sed tu, fuge, curiosus,
Cæteras laudes, fuge, suspicari,
Cæteras culpas, fuge, velle tractas
Sede tremendâ.

Spe tremescentes, recubant, in illâ
Sede, virtutes, pariter que culpæ,
In sui, Patris gremio, tremendâ
Sede, Deique.

The second specimen of his versification is of a totally different character, and shows a considerable precocity.

IN HOROLOGIUM.

Inter marmoreas, Leonoræ, pendula colles,
Fortunata nimis, Machina, dicit horas.
Quà *manibus*, premìt illa duas, insensa, papillas,
Cur mihi sit *digito* tangere, amata, nefas.

Though these two poems may not bear strict criticism, and fall short of those produced by Canning or Lord Wellesley at the same age, Shelley proved himself an excellent Latin scholar, by translating in his leisure hours, several Books of Pliny the Elder, "the enlightened and benevolent," as he styled him, that Encyclopædist whose works he greatly admired, and whose chapter "*De Deo*" was the first germ of his ideas respecting the Nature of God. Shelley had intended to make a complete version of his "Natural History," but stopped short at the chapters on Astronomy, which Dr. Lind, whom he consulted, told him the best scholars could not understand. No author is more difficult to render than Pliny the Elder, for I remember it took me half a day to translate one passage, that most beautiful one, about the nightingale; but Shelley's MS.—and what a MS.! what a free, splendid hand he wrote—was almost pure. I could wish that Mrs. Shelley, if she possess this early production, would give some specimens of what was a remarkable effort for a mere boy. His knowledge of Greek was at that time superficial, but he, in after years, became sensible, as I have often heard him say, of the great inferiority of Latin authors—of the Latin language,—and learned to draw from those richer fountains which he found inexhaustible—to form his lyrics on the Choruses of Sophocles and Æschylus, and his prose on Plato, which he considered a model of style.

Shelley made few, if any intimacies at Eton, and I never heard him mention in after life one of his class-fellows, and I believe their very names had escaped him,—-unlike Lord Byron, who never forgot those in his own form, nor, indeed, what is still more remarkable, as proved in the instance of Proctor, the order in which those in a lower one stood. But Shelley's companions were his books; not that he was either morose or unsocial, and must have had a rather large circle of friends, since his parting breakfast at Eton cost £50; and Mr. Hogg says "he possessed an unusual number of books, Greek and Latin, each inscribed with the name of the donor, which had been presented to him, according to the custom, on quitting Eton,"—a proof that Shelley had been popular among his school-fellows, many of whom were then at Oxford, and they frequently called at his rooms, and although he spoke of them with regard, he generally avoided their society, for it interfered with his beloved study, and interrupted the pursuits to which he ardently and devotedly attached himself."

He told me the greatest delight he experienced at Eton, was from boating, for which he had, as I have already mentioned, early acquired a taste. I was present at a regatta at which he assisted, in 1809, and seemed to enjoy with great zest. A wherry was his *beau ideal* of happiness, and he never lost the fondness with which he regarded the Thames, no new acquaintance when he went to Eton, for at Brentford we had more than once played the truant, and rowed to Kew, and once to Richmond, where we saw Mrs. Jordan, in the Country Girl, at that theatre, the first Shelley had ever visited. It was an era in my life. But he had no fondness for theatrical representations; and in London, afterwards, rarely went to the play.

I now bring Shelley, his school education completed, back to Field-place. We had always been much together during the vacations, and constantly corresponded, and it is a matter of deep regret to me that I did not preserve those letters, the tenor of which was partly literary, and partly metaphysical. Such literature! and such metaphysics! both rather crude. I have a vivid recollection of the walks we took in the winter of 1809. There is something in a frosty day, when the sun is bright, the sky clear, and the air rarified, which acts like a sort of intoxication. On such days Shelley's spirits used to run riot, his "sweet and subtle talk" was to me inebriating and electric. He had begun to have a longing for authorship—a dim presentiment of his future fame—an ambition of making a name in the world. We that winter wrote, in alternate chapters, the commencement of a wild and extravagant romance, where a hideous witch played the principal part, and whose portrait—not a very inviting one—is given in the "Wandering Jew," of which I shall have occasion to speak, almost versified from a passage in our *Nightmare.*

When suddenly, a meteor's glare
With brilliant flash illumed the air,
Bursting thro' clouds of sulphurous smoke,
As from a witch's form it broke :
Of Herculean bulk her frame
Seemed blasted by the lightning's flame—
Her eyes, that flared with lurid light,
Were now with bloodshot lustre filled,
And now thick rheumy gore distilled ;
Black as the raven's plume, her locks
Loose streamed upon the pointed rocks—
Wild floated on the hollow gale,
Or swept the ground in matted trail :
Vile loathsome weeds, whose pitchy fold
Were blackened by the fire of Hell,
Her shapeless limbs of giant mould
Scarce served to hide, as she the while
Grinned horribly a ghastly smile,
And shrieked with hideous yell.

Shelley having abandoned prose for poetry, now formed a *grand* design, a metrical romance on the subject of the Wandering Jew, of which the first three cantos were, with a few additions and alterations, almost entirely mine. It was a sort of thing such as boys usually write, a cento from different favourite authors; the vision in the third canto taken from Lewis's Monk, of which, in common with Byron, he was a great admirer; and the Crucifixion scene, altogether a plagiarism from a volume of Cambridge Prize Poems. The part which I supplied is still in my possession. After seven or eight cantos were *perpetrated*, Shelley sent them to Campbell for his opinion on their merits, with a view to publication. The author of the Pleasures of Hope returned the MS. with the remark, that there were only two good lines in it:

It seemed as if an angel's sigh
Had breathed the plaintive symphony.*

Lines, by the way, savouring strongly of Walter Scott. This criticism of Campbell's gave a death-blow to our hopes of immortality, and so little regard did Shelley entertain for the production, that he left it at his lodgings in Edinburgh, where it was disinterred by some correspondent of Fraser's, and in whose magazine, in 1831, four of the cantos appeared. The others he very wisely did not think worth publishing.

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* The passage ran thus :—

She ceased, and on the listening ear
Her pensive accents died—
So sad they were, so softly clear,
It seemed as if an angel's sigh
Had breathed a plaintive symphony:
So ravishingly sweet their close.

It must be confessed that Shelley's contributions to this juvenile attempt were far the best, and those, with my MS. before me, I could, were it worth while, point out, though the contrast in the style, and the inconsequence of the opinions on religion, particularly in the last canto, are sufficiently obvious to mark two different hands, and show which passages were his. There is a song at the end of the fourth canto which is very musical:

See yon opening rose
Spreads its fragrance to the gale!
It fades within an hour!
Its decay is fast—is pale—
Paler is yon maiden,
Faster is her heart's decay—

Deep with sorrow laden
She sinks in death—away.

The finale of the Wandering Jew is also Shelley's, and proves that thus early he had imbibed opinions which were often the subject of our controversies. We differed also as to the conduct of the poem. It was my wish to follow the German fragment, and put an end to the Wandering Jew—a consummation Shelley would by no means consent to. Mrs. Shelley is misinformed as to the history of the fragment from the German, which I, not Shelley, picked up in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, (as mentioned in my preface to Ahasuerus), and which was not found till some of the cantos had been written. Byron was well acquainted with this fragment,* to be found in one of the notes to Queen Mab, and owes to it the passage in Manfred :

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* The Serpent stung but could not destroy me. The Dragon tormented but dared not to devour me. The foaming billows cast me on the shore, and the burning arrows of existence pierced my cold heart again. The restless Curse held me by the hair, and I could not die.—*Notes to Queen Mab,* p. 29.

I have affronted Death, but in the storm
Of elements, the water shrunk from me,
And fatal things passed harmless: the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
Back by a single hair—I could not die.

Ahasuerus ever continued a favourite with Shelley. He introduces him into Queen Mab, where is to be found a passage, but slightly changed, from the original Wandering Jew, which he took as an epigraph of a chapter in his Rosicrucian.

E'en as a giant oak, which Heaven's fierce flame
Has scathed in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet powerfully and movelessly it bears
The midnight conflict of the wintry waves.*

---

* Still like the scathed pine tree's height,
Braving the tempest of the night;
Have I 'scaped the bickering fire—
Like the scattered pine, which a monument stands
Of faded grandeur, which the brands
Of the tempest-shaken air
Have riven on the desolate heath;
Yet it stands majestic e'en in death,
And raises its wild form there.
Wandering Jew, Fraser's Mag., 1831, p. 672.

Ahasuerus is also made to figure in Hellas, and we find in Alastor the following aspiration:

O! that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice,
Which but one living man has drained, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, wanders for ever,
Lone as incarnate Death.

But Shelley was not the first who has been struck with the poetical capabilities of such a character. Voltaire makes him play a part in the Henriade, and says:

C'etoit un de ces Hebreux,
Qui proscrits sur la terre, et citoyens du monde,
Portent de mers en mers leur misère profonde,
Et d'un antique amas de superstitions,
Ont remplis de long temps toutes les nations.

In order to dispose of this subject, I will add, that after Shelley had been matriculated, on his visit to the Bodleian, the first question he put to the librarian, was, whether he had the Wandering Jew. He supposed Shelley meant the

Periodical so entitled, edited, I believe, by the Marquis d'Argens, who formed one of the wits composing the literary court of Frederick the Great, but told him he knew of no book in German by that name. German was at that time little cultivated in England. There were, I believe, no translations then extant of Schiller. Göthe was only known by the Sorrows of Werther, and Canning and Frere had, in the Antijacobin, thrown ridicule on the poetry of that country, which long lasted. Shelley had imagined that the great Oxford library contained all books in all languages, and was much disappointed. He was not aware that the fragment which I had accidentally found was not a separate publication, but mixed up with the works of some German poet, and had been copied, I believe, from a Magazine of the day.

Shelley's favourite poet in 1809 was Southey. He had read Thalaba till he almost knew it by heart, and had drenched himself with its metrical beauty, I have often heard him quote that exquisite passage, where the Enchantress winds round the finger of her victim a single hair, till the spell becomes inextricable—the charm cannot be broken. But he still more doted on Kehamah, the Curse of which I remember Shelley often declaiming:

And water shall see thee!
And fear thee, and fly thee!
The waves shall not touch thee
As they pass by thee!

* * * *

And this curse shall be on thee,
For ever and ever.

I transcribe the passage from memory, for I have never read since, that romance he used to look upon as perfect; and was haunted by the witch Loranite, raving enthusiastically about the lines, beginning:

Is there a child whose little winning ways
Would lure all hearts, on whom its parents gaze
Till they shed tears of tenderest delight,
Oh hide her from the eye of Loranite!

Wordsworth's writings were at that time by no means to his taste. It was not sufficiently refined to enjoy his simplicity, he wanted something more exciting. Chatterton was then one of his great favourites; he enjoyed very much the literary forgery and successful mystification of Horace Walpole and his contemporaries; and the Immortal Child's melancholy and early fate often suggested his own. One of his earliest effusions was a fragment beginning—it was indeed almost taken from the pseudo Rowley:

Hark! the owlet flaps his wings
In the pathless dell beneath;
Hark! 'tis the night-raven sings
Tidings of approaching death.

I had had lent me the translation of Bùrgher's "Leonora," with Lady Diana Beauclerk's talented illustrations, which so perfectly breathe the spirit of that wild, magical, romantic, fantastic ballad, perhaps without exception the most stirring in any language. It produced on Shelley a powerful effect; and I have in my possession a copy of the whole poem, which he made with his own hand. The story is by no means original, if not taken from an old English ballad. For the *refrain*,

How quick ride the dead,

which occurs in so many stanzas, Burgher is indebted to an old *Volkslied*, was indeed inspired by hearing in the night sung from the church-yard:

Der mond, der scheint so helle
Die Todten reiten so snelle
Feinliebschen, graut dir nicht?

Situate as Horsham is on the borders of St. Leonard's Forest, into which we used frequently to extend our peregrinations,—a forest that has ever been the subject of the legends of the neighbouring peasantry, in whose gloomy mazes

The adders never stynge,
Nor ye nightyngales synge,—

Shelley very early imbibed a love of the marvellous, and, according to one of those legends, "Wo to the luckless wight who should venture to cross it alone on horseback during the night, for no sooner has he entered its darksome precincts, than a horrible decapitated spectre, disregarding all prayers and menaces, leaps behind him on his good steed, and accompanies the affrighted traveller to the boundaries, where his power ceases." It was only another, and perhaps a more poetical version of the story of Leonora, and which Shelley had at one time an idea of working out himself. But St. Leonard's is equally famous for its dragon, or serpent, of which a "True and Wonderful Discourse" was printed at London in 1614, by John Trundle, and to the truth of which three persons then living affixed their signatures. Who could resist a faith in the being of a monster so well certificated? Certainly Shelley was not inclined to do so, as a boy; and if he had read Schiller's Fight of the Dragon at Rhodes, where, by the way, one of his ancestors was slain, in the words of the pedigree, "at winning the battle of the said Isle by the Turks," he would have been still more confirmed in his belief.

Many of these details may appear trivial, but they are not so to the physiologist, inasmuch as they serve to show how the accidental incidents of early impressions, if they did not model, influenced the direction of his mind. Admitting that "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*," I am firmly persuaded of the truth of the above observation; for as all animals have brains like ourselves, dependent on organization, and an instructive kind of knowledge, adapted accordingly; and this instructive knowledge, although perfect in its way at the first, being capable of being influenced by new and altered circumstances; why should not, then, the different circumstances of early life assist the character, and give the bent to a poetical imagination? Animals, as well as ourselves, have intellectual qualities,—the difference is in degree, not in kind; but over and above this, they must have a something superadded, to make the difference, which is the faculty of taking cognizance of things wholly above the senses, of things spiritual and moral—a sense independent of the bodily brain, independent of themselves, and having a natural supremacy in the mind over and above all its other powers. I do not mean to say that a La Place, a Newton, or a Shakspeare, if we had sufficient data to trace the progress of their education, could be reproduced, according to the Helvetian doctrine, by following the same course, for as men are born with different constitutions, features, and habits of body, mental organization must be of course also differently organized. Yet no mind can be developed without preliminary education, and, consequently, all the minutiæ of this education must more or less exercise a modifying influence on it, as every physiologist in the natural history of animals can testify.

Shelley, like Byron, knew early what it was to love—almost all great poets have. It was in the summer of this year, that he became acquainted with our cousin, Harriet Grove. Living in distant counties, they then met for the first time, since they had been children, at Field-place, where she was on a visit. She was born, I think, in the same year with himself.

She was like him in lineaments--her eyes,
Her hair, her features, they said were like to his,
But softened all and tempered into beauty.

After so long an interval, I still remember Miss Grove, and when I call to mind all the women I have ever seen, I know of none that surpassed, or that could compete with her. She was like one of Shakspeare's women—like some Madonna of Raphael. Shelley, in a fragment written many years after, seems to have had her in his mind's eye, when he writes :

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had razed their love, which could not be,
But in dissevering their nativity;
And so they grew together like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
Lull or awaken in the purple prime.

Young as they were, it is not likely that they had entered into a formal engagement with each other, or that their parents looked upon their attachment, if it were mentioned, as any other than an intimacy natural to such near relations, or the mere fancy of a moment; and after they parted, though they corresponded regularly, there was nothing in the circumstance that called for observation. Shelley's love, however, had taken deep root, as proved by the dedication to Queen Mab, written in the following year.

To Harriet G.—

Whose is the love that gleaming thro' the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial strain,
Virtue's own sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Ripen into truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind—
Thou wert the inspiration of my song—
Thine are these early wilding flowers
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of love,
And know, though time may change and years may
roll;
Each floweret gathered in my heart,
It consecrates to thine.

But the lady was not alone "the inspiration of his *song*." In the latter end of this year, he wrote a novel, that might have issued from the Minerva Press, entitled Zastrozzi, which embodies much of the intensity of the passion that devoured him; and some of the chapters were, he told me, by Miss Grove.

In this wild romance there are passages sparkling with brilliancy. A reviewer—for it was reviewed, but in what periodical I forget—spoke of it as a book of much promise. It was shortly followed by another Rosa-Matilda-like production, entitled St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian.

The Rosicrucian was suggested by St. Leon, which Shelley wonderfully admired. He read it till he believed that there was truth in Alchymy, and the *Elixir Vitæ*, which indeed entered into the plot of the Wandering Jew, of which I possess a preface by him, intended for the poem, had it been published. He says:—"The opinion that gold can be made, passed from the Arabs to the Greeks, and from the Greeks to the rest of Europe; those who professed it, gradually assumed the form of a sect, under the name of Alchymists. These Alchymists laid it down as a first principle, that all metals are composed of the same materials, or that the substances at least that form gold, exist in all metals, contaminated indeed by various impurities, but capable of being brought to a perfect state, by purification; and hence that considerable quantities of gold might be extracted from them. The generality of this belief in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, is proved by a remarkable edict of Dioclesian, quoted by Gibbon from the authority of two ancient historians, &c." But if Shelley was at that time a believer in alchymy, he was even as much so in the *Panacea*. He used to cite the opinion of Dr. Franklin, whom he swore by, that "a time would come, when mind will be predominant over matter, or in other words, when a thorough knowledge of the human frame, and the perfection of medical science, will counteract the decay of Nature." "What," added he, "does Condorcet say on the subject ?" and he read me the following passage: "'Is it absurd to suppose this quality of amelioration in the human species as susceptible of an indefinite advancement; to suppose that a period must one day arrive, when death will be nothing more than the effect either of extraordinary accident, or of the slow and gradual decay of the vital powers; and that the duration of the middle space, of the interval between the birth of man and his decay, will have no assignable limit?'" On such opinions was based the Rosicrucian. It was written before he went to Oxford, and published by Stockdale; the scene, singularly enough, is laid at Geneva, and from this juvenile effort I shall make some extracts in prose and verse, in order to show the elements of what it gave rise afterwards to—

Creations vast and fair,
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.

During the last two years of his stay at Eton, he had, as I have already stated, imbued himself with Pliny the Elder, especially being struck with the chapter *De Deo*, and studied deeply Lucretius, whom he considered the best of the Latin poets, and with him he referred at that time, as will be seen from the following extract, all creation to the power of Nature. It must be remembered that it is the Rosicrucian who speaks:—

"From my earliest youth, before it was quenched by complete satiation, *curiosity*, and a desire of unveiling the latent mysteries of nature, was the passion by which all the other emotions of my mind were intellectually organised. This desire led me to cultivate, and with success, the various branches of learning which led to the gates of wisdom. I then applied myself to the cultivation of philosophy, and the *éclat* with which I pursued it, exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Love I cared not for, and wondered why men perversely sought to ally themselves to weakness. Natural philosophy at last became the peculiar science to which I directed my eager enquiries; thence I was led into a train of labyrinthine meditations. I thought of *death*—I shuddered when I reflected, and shrunk in horror from the idea, *selfish* and *self-interested* as I was, of entering a new existence to which I was a stranger. I must either dive into the recesses of futurity, or I must not—I cannot die. Will not this nature —will not this *matter* of which it is composed, exist to all eternity? Ah! I know it will, and by the exertion of the energies with which nature has gifted me, well I know it shall. This was my opinion at that time: I then believed that there existed no God. Ah! at what an exorbitant price have I bought the conviction that there is!! Believing that priestcraft and superstition were all the religion which *man* ever practised, it could not be supposed that I thought there existed supernatural beings of any kind. I believed *Nature* to be self-sufficient and excelling. I supposed not, therefore, that there could be anything beyond nature. I was now about seventeen; I had dived into the depths of metaphysical calculations; with sophistical arguments, had I convinced myself of the non-existence of a First Cause, and by every combined modification of the essences of matter, had I apparently proved that no existences could possibly be, unseen by human vision."

This work contains several poems, some of which were written a year or two before the date of the Romance, and which I insert in these memorabilia, more as literary curiosities, than for their intrinsic merit, though some of them may bear comparison with those contained in Byron's Hours of Idleness. Three of them are in the metre of Walter Scott's Helvellyn, a poem he greatly admired, although the Lay of the Last Minstrel was little to his taste.

SONG.

Twas dead of the night, when I sat in my dwelling
One glimmering lamp was expiring and low,
Around, the dark tide of the tempest was swelling,
Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling,
They bodingly presaged destruction and woe :

'Twas then that I started ! the wild storm was howling,
Nought was seen save the lightning which danced in the sky.
Above me, the crash of the thunder was rolling,
And low chilling murmurs the blast wafted by.

My heart sunk within me, unheeded the war
Of the battling clouds on the mountain tops broke,
Unheeded the thunder peal crashed in mine ear,
This heart, hard as iron, is stranger to fear ;
But conscience in low, noiseless whispering spoke.

'Twas then that her form, in the whirlwind upfolding,
The ghost of the murdered Victoria strode,
In her right hand a shadowy shroud she was holding
She swiftly advanced to my lonely abode.
I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me.—

SONG.

Ghosts of the dead ! have I not heard your yelling,
Ride on the night-rolling breath of the blast,
When o'er the dark ether the tempest was swelling,
And on eddying whirlwind the thunder-peals past.

For oft have I stood on the dark height of Jura,
Which frowns on the valley that opens beneath;
Oft have I braved the chill night-tempest's fury,
Whilst around me I thought échoed murmurs of death.

And now whilst the winds of the mountain are howling,
O Father! thy voice seems to strike on mine ear.
In air, whilst the tide of the night-storm is rolling,
It breaks on the pause of the element's jar.

On the wing of the whirlwind which roars o'er the mountain,
Perhaps rides the ghost of my sire who is dead,
On the mist of the tempest which hangs o'er the fountain,
Whilst a wreath of dark vapour encircles his head.

SONG.

How stern are the woes of the desolate mourner,
As he bends in still grief o'er the hallowed bier,
As ensanguined he turns from the laugh of the scorner,
And drops to Perfection's remembrance a tear;

When floods of despair down his pale cheeks are streaming,
When no blissful hope on his bosom is beaming,
Or if lulled for a while, soon he starts from his dreaming,
And finds torn the soft ties to affection so dear.

Ah! when shall day dawn on the night of the grave,
Or summer succeed to the winter of death?
Rest awhile, hapless victim! and heaven will save
The spirit that faded away with the breath.
Eternity points to its amaranth bower,
Where no clouds of fate o'er the sweet prospect lower,
Unspeakable pleasure, of goodness the dower,
When woe fades away like the mist of the heath.

SONG.

Oh! faint are her limbs, and her footstep is weary,
Yet far must the desolate wanderer roam,
Though the tempest is stern, and the mountain is dreary,
She must quit at deep midnight her pitiless home.
I see her swift foot dash the dew from the whortle,
As she rapidly hastes to the green grove of myrtle;
And I hear, as she wraps round her figure the kirtle,
"Stay thy boat on the lake, dearest Henry! I come!"

High swelled in her bosom the throb of affection,
As lightly her form bounded over the lea,
And arose in her mind every dear recollection,
"I come, dearest Henry, and wait but for thee!"
How sad, when dear hope every sorrow is soothing,
When sympathy's swell the soft bosom is moving,
And the mind the mild joys of affection is proving,
Is the stern voice of fate that bids happiness flee.

Oh! dark lowered the clouds on that horrible eve,
And the moon dimly gleamed through the tempested air,
Oh! how could fond visions such softness deceive?
Oh how could false hope rend a bosom so fair?
Thy love's pallid corse the wild surges are laving,
On his form the fierce swell of the tempest is raving,
But fear not, parting spirit! thy goodness is saving,
In eternity's bower, a seat for thee there.

SONG.

How swiftly through Heaven's wide expanse
Bright day's resplendent colours fade!
How sweetly does the moonbeam's glance
With silver tint St. Iroyne's glade!

No cloud along the spangled air
Is borne upon the evening breeze;
How solemn is the scene! how fair
The moonbeams rest upon the trees!

Yon dark grey turret glimmers white,
Upon it sits the gloomy owl,
Along the stillness of the night
Her melancholy shriekings roll.

But not alone on Iroyne's tower
The silver moonbeam pours her ray
It gleams upon the ivied tower,
It dances in the cascade's spray.

"Ah! why do darkening shades conceal
The hour when man must cease to be?
Why may not human minds unveil
The dim mists of futurity?

The keenness of the world hath torn
The heart which opens to its blast;
Despised, neglected and forlorn,
Sinks the poor wretch in death at last."

BALLAD.

The death-bell beats,
The mountain repeats
The echoing sound of the knell;
And the dark monk now
Wraps the cowl round his brow,
As he sits in his lonely cell.

And the cold hand of death
Chills his shuddering breath,
As he lists to the fearful lay,
Which the ghosts of the sky,
As they sweep wildly by,
Sing to departed day.
And they sing of the hour
When the stern Fates had power
To resolve Rosa's form to its clay.

But that hour is past,
And that hour was the last,
Of peace to the dark monk's brain;
Bitter tears from his eyes gush'd silent and fast,

And he strove to suppress them in vain.
Then his fair cross of gold he dashed on the floor,
When the death-knell struck on his ear—
"Delight is in store for her evermore,
But for me is fate, horror, and fear."

Then his eyes wildly rolled,
When the death-bell tolled,
And he raged in terrific woe;
And he stamped on the ground,
But when ceased the sound,
Tears again begun to flow.

And the ice of despair
Chilled the wild throb of care,
And he sate in mute agony still:
Till the night-stars shone thro' the cloudless air,
And the pale moonbeam slept on the

Then he knelt in his cell,
And the horrors of hell
Were delights to his agonised pain,
And he prayed to God to dissolve the spell,
Which else must ever remain.

And in fervent prayer he knelt to the ground,
Till the abbey bell struck one;
His feverish blood ran chill at the sound,
And a voice hollow, horrible, murmured around,
"The term of thy penance is done."

Grew dark the night;
The moonbeam bright
Waxed faint on the mountain high;
And from the black hill
Went a voice cold and shrill—
"Monk! thou art free to die."

Then he rose on his feet,
And his heart loud did beat,
And his limbs they were palsied with dread;
Whilst the grave's clammy dew
O'er his pale forehead grew;
And he shuddered to sleep with the dead.

And the wild midnight storm
Raved around his tall form,
As he sought the chapel's gloom;
And the sunk grass did sigh
To the wind, bleak and high,
As he search'd for the new-made tomb.

And forms dark and high
Seem'd around him to fly,
And mingle their yells with the blast;
And on the dark wall
Half-seen shadows did fall,
And enhorror'd he onward pass'd.

And the storm fiends wild rave
O'er the new made grave,
And dread shadows linger around,
The monk call'd on God his soul to save,
And in horror sank on the ground.

Then despair nerved his arm,
To dispel the charm,
And he burst Rosa's coffin asunder.
And the fierce storm did swell
More terrific and fell,
And louder peal'd the thunder.

And laugh'd in joy the fiendish throng,
Mix'd with ghosts of the mouldering dead;
And their grisly wings, as they floated along,
Whistled in murmurs dread.

And her skeleton form the dead nun rear'd,
Which dripp'd with the chill dew of hell.
In her half-eaten eye-balls two pale flames appear'd,
But triumphant their gleam on the dark monk glar'd,
As he stood within the cell.

And her lank hand lay on his shuddering brain,
But each power was nerv'd by fear.—
"I never, henceforth, may breathe again;
Death now ends mine anguish'd pain;
The grave yawns—we meet there."

And her skeleton lungs did utter the sound,
So deadly, so lone, and so fell,
That in long vibrations shudder'd the ground,
And as the stern notes floated around,
A deep groan was answer'd from Hell!

Such was the sort of poetry Shelley wrote at this period—and it is valuable, inasmuch as it serves to shew the disposition and bent of his mind in 1808 and 1809, which ran on bandits, castles, ruined towers, wild mountains, storms and apparitions—the Terrific, which according to Burke is the great machinery of the Sublime. In the beginning of the first of these two years, I shewed Shelly some peoms to which I had subscribed by Felicia Browne, whom I had met in North Wales, where she had been on a visit at the house of a connection of mine. She was then sixteen, and it was imposible not to be struck with the beauty (for beautiful she was), the grace, and charming simplicity and *naiveté* of this interesting girl—and on my return from Denbighshire, I made her and her works the frequent subject of conversation with Shelley. Her juvenile productions, remarkable certainly for her age—and some of those which the volume contained were written when she was a mere child—made a powerful impression on Shelley, ever enthusiastic in his admiration of talent; and with a prophetic spirit he foresaw the coming greatness of that genius, which under the name of Hemans afterwards electrified the world.

He desired to become acquainted with the young authoress, and using my name, wrote to her, as he was in the habit of doing to all those who in any way excited his sympathies. This letter produced an answer, and a correspondence of some length passed between them, which of course I never saw, but it is to be supposed that it turned on other subjects besides poetry. I mean, that it was sceptical. It has been said by her biographer, that the poetess was at one period of her life, as is the case frequently with deep thinkers on religion, inclined to doubt; and it is not impossible that such owed its origin to this interchange of thought. One may indeed suppose this to have been the case, from the circumstance of her mother writing to my father, and begging him to use his influence with Shelley to cease from any further communication with her daughter,—in fact, prohibiting their further correspondence. Mrs. Hemans seems, however, to have been a great admirer of his poetry, and to have in some measure modelled her style after his, particularly in her last and most finished effusions, in which we occasionally find a line or two of Shelley's, proving that she was an attentive reader of his works. "Poets," as Shelley says, "the best of them, are a very chameleonic race, and take the colour not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves over which they pass."

It so happened that neither Shelley nor myself in after years mentioned Mrs. Hemans; indeed her finest lyrics were written subsequent to his death; I allude to those which appeared in Blackwood—the longer pieces I have never read, nor I believe had Shelley, who looked upon prose as the best medium for such subjects as she has treated in them, the purely didactic and moral, as he has expressed in the preface to the Prometheus Unbound, where he says, "Didactic poetry is my abhorrence. Nothing can be equally well expressed in prose, that is not tedious and supererrogatory in verse."

His days and nights at Oxford were dedicated to incessant study and composition, and soon after his arrival, he sent me a volume of poems published at Parkers', entitled the "Posthumous works of my Aunt Margaret Nicholson," in which were some stanzas to Charlotte Corday. It might easily be perceived that he had been reading the French revolutionary writers, from the terror of this wild, half-mad production, the poetry of which was well worthy the subject.

The author of "Shelley at Oxford," gives the following account of this extraordinary effort :— "A mad washerwoman named Peg Nicholson, had attempted to stab King George the Third, with a carving knife—the story has been long forgotten, but it was then fresh in the recollection of every one ; it was proposed that we should ascribe the poems to her. The poor woman was still living, and in green vigour, within the walls of Bedlam, but since her existence must be incompatible, there could be no harm in putting her to death, and in creating a nephew and administrator to his aunt's poetical works.

"The idea gave an object and purpose to our burlesque, for Shelley, although of a grave disposition, had a certain sly relish in a practical joke, so that it was ingenious and abstruse, and of a literary nature. To ridicule the strange mixture of sentimentality with the murderous fury of revolutionists, that was so powerful in the compositions of the day, amused him much, and the proofs were altered again to adapt them to their new scheme, but still without any notion of publication. But the bookseller was pleased with the whimsical conceit, and asked to be permitted to publish the book on his own account, promising inviolate secrecy, and as many copies *gratis* as might be required. After some hesitation, permission was granted, upon the plighted honour of the trade. In a few days, or rather in a few hours, a noble quarto appeared,—it consisted of a small number of pages, it is true, but they were of the largest size, of the thickest, the whitest, and the smoothest drawing paper. The poor maniac laundress was grandly styled the late Mrs. Margaret Nicholson, widow; and the sonorous name of Fitzvictor had been culled for the inconsolable nephew and administrator; and to add to his dignity, the waggish printer had picked up some huge types of so unusual a form, that even an antiquary could not spell the words at the first glance. The effect was certainly striking. Shelley had torn open the large square bundle before the printer's boy quitted the room, and holding out a copy with his hands, he ran about in an extacy of delight, gazing on the superb title-page.

"The first poem was a long one, condemning war in the lump, puling trash that might have been written by a quaker, and could only have been published in sober sadness by a society for the diffusion of that kind of knowledge which they deemed useful—useful for some end which they have not been pleased to reveal, and which unassisted reason is wholly incapable to discover. It contained many odes and other pieces professing an ardent attachment to freedom, and proposing to stab all who were less enthusiastic than the supposed authoress. There were some verses about *sucking* in them, to these I objected, as unsuitable to the gravity of an university, but Shelley declared they would be the most impressive of all.

"A few copies were sent as a special favour to trusty and sagacious friends at a distance, whose gravity would not permit them to suspect a hoax, —they read and admired, being charmed with the wild notes of liberty; some indeed presumed to censure mildly certain papers, as having been thrown off in too bold a vein. Nor was a certain success wanting; the remaining copies were rapidly sold in Oxford, at the aristocratic price of half-a-crown per half dozen pages. We used to meet gownsmen in High Street, reading the goodly volume, as they walked, pensive, with grave and sage delight,—some of them perhaps more pensive, because it seemed to pourtray the instant overthrow of all royalty, from a king to a court-card.

"What a strange delusion to admire such stuff—the concentrated essence of nonsense! It was indeed a kind of fashion to be seen reading it in public, as a mark of nice discernment, of a delicate and fastidious taste in poetry, and the very criterion of a choice spirit!"

Without stopping to enquire whether Mr. Hogg might not be mistaken in the sort of appreciation in which this regicide production was held, one can hardly conceive, in comparing this with Queen Mab, which Shelley says was written at 18, in 1809, that they were by the same hand. Though begun, it was not completed till 1812, nor the notes appended to it till the end of 1811, or the beginning of the succeeding year. It has been said, though I do not affirm it, that for these he was much indebted to Godwin; and certainly the correctness, I might say the elegance of the style which they display, and the mass of information they contain on subjects with which, in 1809, he could not have been conversant, seems shew that he must have had some powerful assistance in the task. Queen Mab is undoubtedly a more extraordinary effort of genius than any on record,—and when I say this, I do not forget the early productions of Pope, of Chatterton, or Kirke White. It is the more wonderful when we consider, that vivid and truthful as his descriptions of nature are, he had never been made familiar with her wonders. Mrs. Shelley is mistaken in saying that "at the period of writing Queen Mab, he had been a great traveller in England, Scotland, and Ireland. In fact he had never been 50 miles from his native home, but the country round Horsham is one of exceeding beauty, and imagination supplied what was wanting in reality. And I have often heard him say, that a poet has an instinctive sense of the truth of things, or, as he has expressed more fully the sentiment in his admirable Treatise on Poetry, "He participates in the Eternal, the Infinite, and the One. As far as relates to his conception, time, and place, and number are not. Poetry is an interpretation of a divine nature, through our own; it compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know; it creates anew the universe; it justifies the bold words of Tasso: *Non merita nome di Creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta.*

Compassion for his fellow creatures was the ruling motive that originated this poem. "His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is bursting. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to erect a brotherhood of property and science, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of birth. He looked forward to a sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood. He saw in a fervent call on his fellow creatures to share alike the blessings of the Creator, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted." Such was the spirit that dictated Queen Mab!

Although by some anachronisms, I shall here, for the sake of avoiding recurrences and repetitions, dispose of the subject. Intimate and confidential as we were, Shelley never showed me a line of Queen Mab, which may, in some degree, be accounted for by his knowing that our opinions on very many of the theories, or rather hypotheses, contained in that book, were as wide apart as the poles, and that he was sensible that I should have strongly objected to his disseminating them. Not that, although he did print, he ever published Queen Mab—confining himself to sending copies of it to many of the writers of the day; but falling into the hands of a piratical bookseller, it soon got a wide circulation from his reprint. It is certain that in its present form, Shelley would never havo admitted it into a collection of his works, and the modification of some of his opinions—though, in the main, he never changed the more important ones—would have prevented him from putting forth those crude speculations of his boyish days. That such was the case, we may judge from a letter addressed to the editor of the Examiner, bearing date June 22nd, 1821, wherein he says :

"Having heard that a poem entitled Queen Mab has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair as it relates to me :—

"A poem, entitled Queen Mab, was written by me at the age of eighteen, I dare say in a sufficiently intemperate spirit, but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. *I doubt not that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition ; that in all that concerns moral and political speculations, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine,* it is still *more crude and immature.* I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression, and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear *it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom.* I have directed my solicitor to apply for an injunction to restrain the sale, but after the precedent of Mr. Southey's Wat Tyler—a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm—with little hope of success."

I may here remark, that it is singular and unaccountable that the editor of the Examiner should not have complied with Shelley's wishes in giving publicity to this letter, which could not but have proved beneficial to Shelley. He had so completely forgotten this poem of his youth, that in a letter to Mr. Horace Smith, he says, "If you happen to have a copy of Clarke's edition of Queen Mab for me, I should like to see it. I hardly know what this poem may be about. I fear it is rather rough." This letter bears date Sept. 14th, 1821.

I have marked in italics the passages in these extracts that show his change of opinions—his regret of the publication as a literary composition, and his fear of its tendency, although perhaps Mrs. Shelley is right in including Queen Mab among her lamented husband's works, from its wide dissemination, and her utter inability to suppress it. Everything is valuable that came from his pen, inasmuch as it assists to show the progress of his master-mind, the elements on which the superstructure of his philosophy was reared. I cannot help observing, *en passant*, that a copy of Queen Mab was hunted out by his father-in-law, and that the proceedings in Chancery, which I shall have to detail at some length, were principally based on the opinions laid down in that work.

But to proceed: I was acquainted with Sir Thomas Lawrence, not the great painter, but a knight of Malta, whom I met first at Paris, and afterwards in London. He had purchased his knighthood in the French metropolis, where an office was opened for the sale of these honours. Nobility of origin was held as an indispensable qualification for such titles; but it would seem that it was not very rigorously enforced, for in Sir Thomas's case the proofs were defective on the paternal side, and it was with a consciousness of this fact that he wrote a sort of half-historical romance, entitled the History of the Nairs, in which he endeavours to establish the supremacy of woman.

When I saw him in town, he was always wading at the British Museum, in the stagnant pool of genealogy, endeavouring in spite of his system, to discover the flaw in his escutcheon a mistake, and when he failed in so doing, used to contend that the only real nobility was in the female line. To what absurdity will not an *idée fixe* impart conviction, or the semblance of conviction!

After the publication of this strange History of the Nairs, he sent it with a letter to Shelley, referring him to a note in Queen Mab hostile to matrimony, and taxing him with apostacy from his principles, in having twice entered that state. This epistle produced an answer; I have not the whole of it, though it was published by Lawrence. Shelley says there, "I abhor seduction as much as I adore love; and if I have conformed to the uses of the world on the score of matrimony, it is" (the argument is borrowed, by the bye, from Godwin, in his Life of Mary Wolstonecraft,) "that disgrace always attaches to the weaker side."

A decided anti-matrimonialist, the historian of the Nairs was by no means convinced by this argument. One evening he persuaded me to accompany him to the Owenite chapel, in Charlotte-street. In the ante-room, I observed a man at a table, on which were laid for sale, among many works on a small scale, this History of the Nairs, and Queen Mab, and after the discourse by Owen—a sort of doctrinal rather than moral essay, in which he promised his disciples a millennium of roast beef and fowls, and three or four days' recreation out of the seven, equal division of property, and an universality of knowledge by education,—we had an interview with the lecturer and reformer, whom I had met some years before at the house of a Northumberland lady. On finding that I was connected with Shelley, he made a long panegyric on him, and taking up one of the Queen Mabs from the table, read, premising that it was the basis of one of his chief tenets, the following passage:

"How long ought the sexual connection to last? What law ought to specify the extent of the grievance that should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love one another. Any law that should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection, would be a most intolerable tyranny, and most unworthy of toleration."

If Lord Melbourne did not hold similar opinions, he at least thought there was no harm in encouraging them, by presenting Mr. Owen to our Queen. The question is, whether, in the present state of society, and with the want of education that characterises the sect of which Mr. Owen is the founder, the Socialists, their tenets are, or are not pregnant with danger. This *philanthropist*, however, certainly is sincere in believing the contrary; and up to this time experience seems to have confirmed his belief. He has spent his life, and expended his fortune in inculcating them; and a more thoroughly amiable and moral man does not exist. "He has had but one object in both hemispheres," (to use the words of Frederica Bremer,) "to help the mass of mankind to food and raiment, in order that the mass may make provision for their mental improvement; for when the necessary wants are satisfied, man turns to those of a more general and exalted kind. Hence, when the great daywork of the earth is done with men, the Sabbath will begin, in which a generation of tranquil worshippers will spread over the earth, no longer striving after perishable treasures, but seeking those which are eternal; a people whose whole life will be devoted to the improvement of their mental powers, and to the worship of the Creator in spirit and in truth. Then the day will arrive in which the angels will say, 'Peace upon Earth!!!'"

This edition of Queen Mab, that has led to the above quotation, bore the name of Brooks as publisher. It contains a beautiful frontispiece illustrative of the death of Ianthe, and as a motto, the well-known line from some Greek dramatist —probably Æschylus—which may be rendered:

> Give me whereon to stand, I'll move the earth.

Brooks did, or does, live at the bottom of Oxford Street, and I paid him more than one visit. He had a correspondent at Marlow, who knew Shelley, but whose name I have forgotten, from whom he obtained a copy of Queen Mab, which, like the Wandering Jew, had probably been left by Shelley's inadvertence in his abode here. This copy was exceedingly interlined, very much curtailed and modified, as by a specimen given in a fragment entitled the "Demon of the World," appended to "Alastor;" and what is still more important and worthy of remark, with the Notes torn out. The copy had been revised with great care, and as though Shelley had an intention at the time of bringing out a new edition, an idea which his neglect of his labour shews he soon abandoned. This emendated work is a great curiosity, and has scattered about the pages rude pen-and-ink drawings of the most fantastic kind, proving the abstraction of his mind during this pursuit. It was a comment that led me to many speculations, suggesting a deep sense of the obloquy of which he had made himself the victim, and betokening a fluctuation of purpose, a hesitation and doubt of himself and of the truth or policy of his theories. That Mr. Brooks (he was the publisher if not the printer of the Owenites) did not make use of the *refacciamenti* or *pentimate* in his numerous reprints of Queen Mab, may easily be conceived, for these very alterations were the only objectionable parts to him, and he would have thought it a sacrilege to have struck out a word of the original text, much less the notes. Queen Mab is indeed the gospel of the sect, and one of them told me, that he had found a passage in Scripture, that unquestionably applied to Shelley, and that the word *Shiloh* was pronounced in the Hebrew precisely in the same manner as his name.

It is much to be desired that Mrs. Shelley should endeavour to obtain this Queen Mab of Mr. Brooks. I have no doubt that he would estimate it at a price far beyond my means, nor have I made any overtures to him for the purchase, invaluable as its acquisition would be to me at this moment.

Before leaving Queen Mab I have a few words to add:—

There is a vast deal of *twaddle* in Moore's Life of Byron, respecting early scepticism, where he says, "It and infidelity rarely find an entrance into youthful minds," adding, "It is fortunate that these inroads are seldom felt in the mind till a period of life when the character, already formed, is out of the reach of their disturbing influence—when being the result, however erroneous, of thought and reasoning, they are likely to partake of the sobriety of the process by which they are acquired, and being considered but as matters of pure speculation, to have as little share in determining the mind towards evil, *as too often the most orthodox creeds have at the same age of influencing it towards good.* What the sense of these words marked in italics may be, is beyond my comprehension. But in my way of thinking, it is when the reasoning powers *are* matured—the effervescence of youth has somewhat cooled down—when the self-sufficiency of scholarship, the pride of being thought to think differently from the generality of the world, the vanity of running *a-muck* against received opinions, has yielded to reason and judgment, and man begins to know that he knows nothing, that he ceases to arrogate to himself a superiority over his fellows—learns to become humble and diffident; and this is not a state of mind that leads to doubt. But as to the unfrequency of scepticism in youth, Moore never laid down a more false or unphilosophical axiom. Why, he must have forgotten Gibbon, and Southey, and Cowper, and Malherbe, and Coleridge, and Kirke White, and a hundred others, himself included, (vide Little's Poems,) when he penned this startling and unborne-out proposition. If he means that, absorbed in dissipation, and carried away by their passions, most young men seldom reflect on subjects most worthy of reflection, I agree with him; but neither Byron nor Shelley were of this kind. They did not, as with the πολλος, take for granted what had been inculcated; they were not contented with impressions, they wished to satisfy themselves that their impressions were right, and both fell into scepticism, one from presumption and an overweening, foolish ambition of making himself out worse than he was; and Shelley from what he really thought "a matter of pure speculation;" the result, however erroneous, to repeat Moore's words, "of thought and reasoning." Little dependence is however to be placed on the profession of faith contained in the two letters Byron wrote to Mr. Dallas, at 20, (in 1808,) in which his object clearly was—an object he carried out all his life, with his biographer even more than any one else—*mystification.* Voltaire was his horn-book; but in the list of works he says he had studied in different languages, he only confesses to have read his Charles XII., though that scoffer at religion was his delight and admiration, and with him he fell into the slimy pool of materialism.

Shelley's scepticism produced different fruits—he would never have joined with Matthews, Hobhouse, Scrope Davies, and "beasts after their kind," in those orgies which were celebrated at Newstead, when with Byron for an Abbot, they travestied themselves in monkish dresses, and the apparatus of beads and crosses, and passed their nights in intemperance and debauchery. No, his way of thinking never affected the purity of his morals. "Looking upon religion as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues that would make men brethren, he raised his voice against it, though by so doing he was perfectly aware of the odium he would incur, of the martyrdom to which he doomed himself." Mrs. Shelley beautifully remarks, "that older men, when they oppose their fellows, and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them; but youth is rash, nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious and pronounced as criminal. Had he foreseen such a fate, he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills of life he witnessed, not to scorn danger." That fate was at hand. But I anticipate.

We come now to another epoch in the life of the poet—Shelley at Oxford:—

He was matriculated, and went to University

College at the commencement of Michaelmas term, at the end of October 1810. The choice of this college (though a respectable one, by no means of high repute) was made by his father for two reasons—first, that he had himself, as already mentioned, been a member of it,—and secondly, because it numbered among its benefactors some of his ancestors, one of whom had founded an Exhibition. I had left the university before he entered it, and only saw him once in passing through the city. "His rooms were in the corner next to the hall of the principal quadrangle, on the first floor, and on the right of the entrance, but by reason of the turn in the stairs, when you reach them, they will be on the right hand. It is a spot, which I might venture to predict many of our posterity will hereafter reverently visit, and reflect an honour on that college, which has nothing so great to distinguish it." The portrait of him drawn by his friend, from whom I have borrowed largely, corresponded with my recollection of him at this interview. "His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much, that he seemed of low stature." De Quincey says, that he remembers seeing in London, a little Indian ink sketch of him in his academical costume of Oxford. The sketch tallying pretty well with a verbal description which he had heard of him in some company, viz.. that he looked like an elegant and slender flower whose head drooped from being surcharged with rain." Where is this sketch? How valuable would it be! "His clothes," Mr. H. adds, "were expensive, and according to the most approved mode of the day, but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt, sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate, and almost feminine, of the purest red and white, yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having past the autumn, as he said, in shooting;" and he said rightly, for he had, during September, often carried a gun in his father's preserves; Sir Timothy being a keen sportsman, and Shelley himself an excellent shot, for I well remember one day in the winter of 1809, when we were out together, his killing at three successive shots, three snipes, to my great astonishment and envy, at the tail of the pond in front of Field-place.

" His features, his whole face, and his head, were particularly small, yet the last appeared of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers swiftly through his locks, unconsciously, so that it was singularly rough and wild—a particularity which he had at school. His features were not symmetrical, the mouth perhaps excepted, yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation—a fire—an enthusiasm—a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual, for there was a softness and delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) an air of profound veneration, that characterises the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls) of the great masters of Rome and Florence."

"I observed, too, the same contradiction in his rooms, which I had often remarked in his person and dress. The carpet, curtain, and furniture were quite new, and had not passed through several generations of students on the payment of the thirds, that is, the third price last given. This general air of freshness was greatly obscured by the indescribable confusion in which the various objects were mixed. Scarcely a single article was in its right place—books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable, with money, stockings, prints, crucibles, bags, and boxes, were scattered on the floor in every place, as if the young chemist, in order to analyze the mystery of creation, had endeavoured first to reconstruct the primæval chaos. The tables, and especially the carpet, were already stained with large spots of various hues, which frequently proclaimed the agency of fire. An electrical machine, an air pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers, were conspicuous amidst the mass of matter. Upon the table by his side, were some books lying open, a bundle of new pens, and a bottle of japan ink, with many chips, and a handsome razor, that had been used as a knife. There were bottles of soda-water, sugar, pieces of lemon, and the traces of an effervescent beverage."

Such, with some variations, was, as they come back on me, the appearance of Shelley and his rooms during this visit to him in the November of 1810.

He had not forgotten our Walker's Lectures, and was deep in the mysteries of chemistry, and had apparently been making some experiments; but it is highly improbable that Shelley was qualified to succeed in that science, where scrupulous minuteness and a mechanical accuracy are indispensable. His chemical operations seemed to an unskilful observer to premise nothing but disasters. He had blown himself up at Eton. He had inadvertently swallowed some mineral poison, which he declared had seriously injured his health, and from the effects of which he should never recover. His hands, his clothes, his books, and his furniture were stained and covered by medical acids—more than one hole in the carpet could elucidate the ultimate phenomena of combustion, especially in the middle of the room, where the floor had also been burnt by his mixing ether with some other fluid in a crucible, and the honourable wound was speedily enlarged by rents, for the philosopher, as he hastily crossed the room in pursuit of truth, was frequently caught in it by the foot.

And speaking of electricity and chemistry, Mr. Hogg says, "I know little of the physical sciences, and felt therefore but a slight degree of interest in them. I looked upon his philosophical apparatus as toys and playthings, like a chess board. Through want of sympathy, his zeal, which was at first ardent, gradually cooled, and he applied himself to those pursuits, after a time less frequently, and with less earnestness." "The true value of these," Mr. H. adds, "was often the subject of animated discussion; and I remember one evening at my rooms, when he had sought refuge from the extreme cold in the little apartment or study, I referred, in the course of our debate, to a passage in Zenophon's Memorabilia, where Socrates speaks in dispraise of physics." But that Shelley, instead of disparaging, was almost inclined to overrate them, is proved by the great interest he took in 1820, in Mr. Reevely's steam-boat, and the active assistance he afforded him in completing the engine; and his imagination seems to have fallen back in his old pursuits, with the delight of a boy, where he says, (he had been visiting the laboratory of the young engineer) :—

Magical forms the brick floor overspread,
Proteus transformed to metal, did not make
More figures and more strange, nor did he take
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
Or heaped himself in such a horrid mass
Of tin and iron, not to be understood,
And forms of unimaginable wood,
To puzzle Tubal Cain, and all his brood;
Great screws, and cones, and wheels of grooved blocks,
The elements of what will stand the shocks
Of war, and wind, and time; upon the table
More knacks and quips there be, than I am able
To catalogue in this verse of mine—
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
But quicksilver—that dew, which the gnomes drink—
When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the dæmons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava-cry, "Halloo!"
And call out to the cities o'er their head—
Roofs, towns, and shrines—the dying and the dead
Crash thro' the chinks of earth—and then all quaff
Another rouse, and hold their sides, and laugh.
This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within
The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,
In colour like the wake of light that stains
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze
Is still—blue Heaven smiles over the pale seas—

And in this bowl of quicksilver—*for I*
Yield to the impulse of an infancy
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float
The idealism of a paper boat,
A hollow screw with cogs.

On reading these beautifully imaginative lines, who will say with Wordsworth, that there is no poetry in a steam engine?

But "the Wierd Archimage," as Shelley calls himself, was right in abandoning chemistry. I doubt, with Mr. Hogg, whether he would ever have made a natural philosopher. As a boy he was fond of flying kites, and at Field Place, made an electrical one, an idea borrowed from Franklin, in order to draw lightning from the clouds—fire from Heaven, like a new Prometheus. But its phenomena did not alone excite his interest. He thought "what a mighty instrument electricity might be in the hands of him who knew how to wield it, and in what manner to direct its omnipotent energies; what a terrible organ would the supernal shock prove, if we were able to guide it; how many of the secrets of nature could not such a stupendous force unlock! "The galvanic battery," said Shelley, "is a new engine. It has been used hitherto to an insignificant extent, yet it has worked wonders already. What will not an extraordinary combination of troughs of colossal magnitude—a well arranged system of hundreds of metallic plates, effect? Shelley also speculated on the uses of chemistry as applied to agriculture, in transmuting an unfruitful region into a land of exuberant plenty; on generating from the atmospheric air, water in every situation, and in every quantity; and of the power of providing heat at will,"—adding, "what a comfort it would be to the poor at all times, and especially in the winter, if we could be masters of caloric, and could at will furnish them with a constant supply!"

"With such fervour," adds Mr. H., "did the slender and beardless boy speculate concerning the march of physical science; his speculations were as wild as the experience of twenty years had shown them to be, but the zealous earnestness for the augmentation of knowledge, and the glowing philanthropy and boundless benevolence that marked them, are without parallel."

We had been more frequent correspondents than ever, since he became an Oxonian, and our friendly controversies were carried on with greater animation. But at this period of time the tenor, though not the nature, of them has entirely escaped me, and as I can draw from a most authentic source his metaphysical speculations, I shall make use of these materials in another place when I come to treat of them.

Mr. Hogg says that "Shelley knew nothing of German, but from the glimmering light of translation;" there I think he is mistaken, for on the occasion of this visit he showed me a volume of tales which he had himself rendered from the original. During half an hour that we were together, (I passed the whole day with him) I perused these MSS., and they gave me a very low idea of the literature of that country, then almost unknown in England. It was evident that the books that had fallen into his hands were from the pens of very inferior writers; and I told him he had lost his time and labour in clothing them in his own language, and that I thought he could write much better things himself. He showed and read to me many letters he had received in controversies he had originated with learned divines; among the rest with a bishop, under the assumed name of a woman. "He had commenced this practice at Eton, and when he came to Oxford he retained and extended the former practice, keeping up the ball of doubt in letters, and of those he received many, so that the arrival of the postman was always an anxious moment to him. This practice he had learnt of a physician, from whom he had taken instructions in chemistry, and of whose character and talents he often spoke with profound veneration. It was indeed the usual course with men of learning, as their biographers and many volumes of such epistles testify. The physician was an old man, and a man of the old school; he confined his epistolary discussions to matters of science, and so did his disciple for a long time; but when metaphysics usurped the place in his affections, that chemistry had before had, the latter fell into discerptations respecting existences still more subtle than gasses and the electric fluid. The transition, however, from physics to metaphysics was gradual. Is the electric fluid material? he would ask his correspondent. Is light? Is the vital principle in vegetables?—in the human soul? His individual character had proved an obstacle to his inquiries, even whilst they were strictly physical. A refuted or irritated chemist had suddenly concluded a long correspondence by telling his youthful opponent that he would write to his master and have him flogged. The discipline of a public school, however salutary in other respects, was not favourable to free and fair discussion, and hence Shelley began to address his enquiries anonymously, or rather that he might receive an answer as Philalethes and the like; but even at

Eton the postman did not understand Greek, and to prevent miscarriages, therefore, it was necessary to adopt a more familiar name, as John Short or Thomas Long.

"In briefly describing the nature of Shelley's epistolary contentions, the impression that they were conducted on his part, or considered by him with frivolity, or any unseemly levity, would be most erroneous; his whole frame of mind was grave, earnest, and anxious, and his deportment was reverential, with an edification reaching beyond his age, an age wanting in reverence—an unlearned age—a young age for the lack-learning. Hume permits no object of respect to remain—Locke approaches the most awful speculations with the same indifference as if he were about to handle the properties of triangles; the small deference rendered to the most holy things by the able theologian Paley, is not the least remarkable of his characteristics. Wiser and better men displayed anciently, together with a more profound erudition, a superior and touching solemnity; the meek seriousness of Shelley was redolent of those good old times, before mankind had been despoiled of a main ingredient in the composition of happiness, a well directed veneration.

"Whether such disputations were decorous or profitable, may be perhaps doubtful; there can be no doubt, however, since the sweet gentleness of Shelley was easily and instantly swayed by the mild influences of friendly admonition, that had even the least dignified of his elders suggested the propriety of his pursuing his metaphysical inquiries with less ardour, his obedience would have been prompt and perfect." It is to be lamented that all his letters written at this time should have perished, as they would throw light on the speculations of his active and inquiring mind.

Shelley was an indefatigable student, frequently devoting to his books ten or twelve hours of the day, and part of the night. The absorption of his ideas by reading, was become in him a curious phenomenon. He took in seven or eight lines at a glance, and his mind seized the sense with a velocity equal to the twinkling of an eye. Often would a single word enable him at once to comprehend the meaning of the sentence. His memory was prodigious. He with the same fidelity assimilated, to use a medical term for digestion, the ideas acquired by reading and those which he derived from reflection or conversation. In short, he possessed the memory of places, words, things, and figures. Not only did he call up objects at will, but he revived them in the mind, in the same situations, and with the lights and colours in which they had appeared to him at particular moments. He collected not only the gist of the thoughts in the book wherefrom they were taken, but even the disposition of his soul at the time. Thus, by an unheard-of faculty and privilege, he could retrace the progress and the whole course of his imagination from the most anciently sketched idea, down to its last development. His brain, habituated from earliest youth to the complicated mechanism of human forces, drew from its rich structure a crowd of admirable images, full of reality and freshness, with which it was continually nurtured. He could throw a veil over his eyes, and find himself in a *camera obscura*, where all the features of a scene were reproduced in a form more pure and perfect than they had been originally presented to his external senses.

" As his love of intellectual pursuits was vehement, and the vigour of his genius almost celestial, so were the purity and sanctity of his life most conspicuous. His food was plain and simple as that of a hermit, with a certain anticipation at this time of a vegetable diet, respecting which he afterwards became an enthusiast in theory, and in practice an irregular votary. With his usual fondness for moving the abstruse and difficult questions of the highest theology, he loved to inquire, whether man can justify, on the ground of reason alone, the practice of taking the life of inferior animals, except in the necessary defence of his life, and of his means of life, the fruits of that field which he had tilled, from violence and spoliation. Not only have considerable sects, he said, denied the right altogether; but those among the tender-hearted and imaginative people of antiquity, who accounted it lawful to kill and eat, appear to have doubted whether they might take away life solely for the use of man alone. They slew their cattle, not simply for human gusto, like the less scrupulous butchers of modern times, but only as a sacrifice for the honour and in the name of the Deity, or rather of those subordinate divinities, to whom as they believed the Supreme Being had assigned the creation and conservation of the visible material world; as an incitement to these pious offerings, they partook of the residue of the victims, of which, without such sanction and sanctification, they would not have presumed to taste. So reverent was the caution of a humane and prudent antiquity. Bread became his chief sustenance; when his regimen attained an austerity that afterwards distinguished it, he could have lived on bread alone, without repining. When he was walking in London, he would suddenly turn into a baker's shop, purchase a supply, and breaking a loaf, he would offer it to his companion. 'Do you know,' he said to me one day with some surprise, 'that such a one does not like bread? Did you ever know a person who disliked bread?' And he told me that a friend had refused such an offer. I explained to him that the individual in question probably had no objection to bread in a moderate quantity, and with the usual adjuncts, and was only unwilling to devour two or three pounds of dry bread in the street, and at an early hour. Shelley had no such scruples—his pockets were generally well stored with bread. A circle upon the carpet clearly defined by an ample verge of crumbs, often marked the place where he had long sat at his studies—his face nearly in contact with the book. He was near-sighted."

Shelley frequently exercised his ingenuity in long discussions respecting various questions in logic, and more frequently indulged in metaphysical inquiries. Mr. H. and himself read several metaphysical works together in whole or in part, for the first time, and after a previous perusal by one or both of them. The examination of a chapter of "Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding," would induce him at any moment to quit every other pursuit. They read together Hume's Essays, and some productions of the Scotch metaphysicians of inferior ability, all with assiduous and friendly altercations, and the latter writers at least with small profit, unless some sparks of knowledge were struck out in the collison of debate. They read also certain popular French works, that treat of man for the most part in a mixed method, metaphysically, morally and politically. "We must bear in mind, however, that he was an eager, bold, and unwearied disputant, and although the position in which the sceptic and materialist love to entrench themselves, offer no picturesque attractions to the eye of the poet, it is well adapted to defensive warfare, and it is not easy for an ordinary enemy to dislodge him who occupies a post that derives strength from the weakness of the assailant. It has been insinuated that whenever a man of real talent and generous feelings condescends to fight under these colours, he is guilty of a dissimulation which he deems harmless, perhaps even praiseworthy, for the sake of victory in argument. It is not a little curious to observe one whose sanguine temper led him to believe implicitly every assertion, so that it was impossible and incredible, exulting in his philosophical doubts, when, the calmest and most suspicious of analists, he refused to admit, without strict proof, propositions, that many who are not deficient in metaphysical prudence account obvious and self-evident. The sceptical philosophy had another charm, it partook of the new and wonderful, inasmuch as it called into doubt, and seemed to place in jeopardy, during the joyous hours of disputation, many important practical conclusions. To a soul loving excitement and change, destruction, so it be on a large scale, may sometimes prove hardly less inspiring than creation. The fact of the magician, who by the touch of his rod, could cause the great Pyramid to dissolve into the air, and to vanish from the sight, would be as surprising as the achievement of him, who by the same rod, could instantly raise a similar mass in any chosen spot. If the destruction of the eternal monument was only apparent, the ocular sophism would be at once harmless and ingenious; so was it with the logomachy of the young and strenuous logician, and his intellectual activity merited praise and reward. There was another reason, moreover, why the sceptical philosophy should be welcome to Shelley,—at that time he was young, and it is generally acceptable to youth. It is adopted as the abiding rule of reason, throughout life, by those who are distinguished by a sterility of soul, a barrenness of invention, a total dearth of fancy, and a scanty stock of learning. Such, in truth, although the warmth of feverish blood, the light burthen of a few years, and the precipitation of experience, may sometimes seem to contradict the assertion, is the state of mind at the commencement of manhood, when the vessel has, as yet, received but a small portion of the cargo of the accumulated wisdom of past ages; when the amount of mental operations that have actually been performed is small, and the materials upon which the imagination can work are insignificant; consequently, the inventions of the young are crude and frigid. Hence the most fertile mind exactly resembles in early youth, the hopeless barrenness of those, who have grown old in vain, as to its actual condition, and it differs only in the unseen capacity for future production. The philosopher who declares that he knows nothing, and that nothing can be known, will readily find followers among the young, for they are sensible that they possess the requisite qualification for entering the school, and are as far advanced in the science of ignorance as their master. A stranger who had chanced to have been present at some of Shelley's disputes, or who knew him only from having read some of the short argumentative essays which he composed as voluntary exercises, would have said, 'Surely the soul of Hume passed by transmigration into the body of that eloquent young man, or rather he represents one of the enthusiastic and animated materialists of the French school, whom revolutionary violence lately intercepted at an early age in his philosophical career.'

"There were times, however, when a visitor who had listened to the glowing discourses delivered with a more intense ardour, would have hailed a young Platonist breathing forth the ideal philosophy, and in his pursuit of the intellectual world, entirely overlooking the material, or noticing it only to contemn it. The tall boy, who is permitted, for the first time, to scare the partridges with his fowling piece, scorns to handle the top or the hoop of his younger brother; thus the man, whose years and studies are mature, slights the feeble aspirations after the higher departments of knowledge that were deemed so important during his residence at college. It seems laughable, but it is true, his knowledge of Plato was derived solely from Dacier's translation of a few of the Dialogues, and from an English version of that French translation. Since that time, however, few of his countrymen have read the golden works of that majestic philosopher in the original language, more frequently, and more carefully; and few, if any, with more profit than Shelley. Although the source whence flowed his earliest taste of the divine philosophy was scanty and turbid, the draught was not the less grateful to his lips. Shelley was never tired of reading passages from the dialogues contained in this collection, especially from the Phœdo, and he was vehemently excited by the striking doctrines which Socrates unfolds, especially by that which teaches, that all our knowledge consists of reminiscences of what we had learnt in a former existence. He often even paced about his room, slowly shook his wild locks, and discoursed in a solemn tone with a mysterious air, speculating concerning our previous condition, and of the nature of our life and occupations in the world, where, according to Plato, we had attained to erudition, and had advanced ourselves in knowledge, so that the most studious and the most inventive, in other words, those who have the best memory, are able to call back a part only, and with much pain, and extreme difficulty, of what was familiar to us."

This doctrine, introduced by Pythagoras, after his travels in India, and derived from the Gymnosophists, was received almost without question by several of the philosophers of Greece; and long before Shelley went to Oxford, had taken deep root in his mind, for he had found it in Coleridge and introduced it into the Wandering Jew. That Shelley should have been delighted in finding it unfolded in the Phædo, I can easily believe. It was a doctrine that vindicated the justice of the Gods; for, by it, the inequalities of conditions, the comparative misery and happiness of individuals, were reconciled to the mind, such individuals being rewarded or punished in this life for good or evil deeds committed in a former state of existence. The objection, that we have no memory of that state, is answered by the question, "Does a child of two years old remember what passed when he was a year old?" But it is Shelley's opinion that it is permitted to some gifted persons to have glimpses of the past, and he thus records it :

"I have beheld scenes, with the intimate and unaccountable connection of which with the obscure parts of my own nature, I have been irresistibly impressed. I have beheld a scene that has produced no unusual effect on my thoughts. After a lapse of many years I have dreamed of this scene. It has hung on my memory, it has haunted my thoughts at intervals with the pertinacity of an object connected with human affections. I have visited this scene again. Neither the dream could be dissociated from the landscape, nor the landscape from the dream, nor feelings such as neither singly could have awakened from both. But the most remarkable event of this nature which ever occurred to me, happened at Oxford. I was walking with a friend in the neighbourhood of that city, engaged in earnest and interesting conversation; we suddenly turned a corner of a lane, and the view, which its high banks and hedges had concealed, presented itself. The view consisted of a windmill, standing in one among many pleasing meadows, inclosed with stone walls. The irregular and broken ground between the wall and the road in which we stood, a long low hill behind the windmill, and a grey covering of uniform cloud spread over the evening sky. It was that season when the last leaf had just fallen from the scant and stunted ash. The scene surely was a common one, the season and the hour little calculated to kindle lawless thought. It was a tame and uninteresting assemblage of objects, such as would drive the imagination for refuge in serious and sober talk to the evening fireside and the dessert of winter fruits and wine. The effect which it produced on me was not such as could be expected. I suddenly remembered to have seen the exact scene in some dream of long.— Here I was obliged to leave off, overcome with thrilling horror." Mrs. Shelley appends to this passage the following remark: "This fragment was written in 1815. I remember well his coming to me from writing it, pale and agitated, to seek refuge in conversation from the fearful emotions it excited." "No man," she adds, "had such keen sensations as Shelley. His nervous temperament was wound up by the delicacy of his health to an intense degree of sensibility; and while his active mind pondered for ever upon, and drew conclusions from his sensations, his reveries increased their vivacity, till they mingled with and were one with thought, and both became absorbing and tumultuous, even to physical pain."

Balzac relates of Louis Lambert a similar phenomenon to the above:—"Whilst at school at Blois, during a holiday, we were allowed to go to the chateau of Rochambeau. As soon as we reached the hill, whence we could behold the chateau, and the tortuous valley where the river wound through meadows of graceful slope,—one of those admirable landscapes on which the lively sensations of boyhood, or those of love have impressed such a charm that we can never venture to look on them a second time,—Louis Lambert said to me,—'I have seen all this last night in dream.' He recognised the grove of trees under which we were, and the disposition of the foliage, the colour of the water, the turrets of the chateau, the lights and shades, the distances, in fine all the details of the spot which we had then perceived for the first time." After some interesting conversation, which would occupy too much space here, Balzac makes Louis Lambert say,—'If the landscape did not come to me, which it is absurd to think, then must I have come to it. If I were here whilst I slept, does not this fact constitute a complete separation between my body and inward being? Does it not form a locomotive faculty in the soul, or effects that are equivalent to locomotive? Thus, if the disunion of our two natures could take place during sleep, why could they not equally discover themselves when awake?' "Is there not an entire science in this phenomenon?" added he, striking his forehead. "If it be not the principle of a science, it certainly betrays a singular faculty in man."

To return, however, to Shelley and Oxford. "It is hazardous to speak of his earlier efforts as a Platonist, lest they should be confounded with his subsequent advancement; it is not easy to describe his first introduction to the exalted wisdom of antiquity, without borrowing inadvertently from the knowledge which he afterwards acquired. The cold, ungenial, foggy atmosphere of northern metaphysics was less suited to the ardent temperament of his soul than the warm, vivifying climate of the southern and eastern philosophy. His genius expanded under the benign influence of the latter, and he derived copious instruction from a luminous system that is only dark through excess of brightness, and seems obscure to vulgar vision through its extreme radiance." On this subject I shall have hereafter much to say. Nevertheless, for the present I will repeat, that "in argument, and to argue on all questions was his dominant passion. He usually adopted the scheme of the Sceptics; partly because it was more popular, and is more generally understood. The disputant who would use Plato as a text-book in this age, would reduce his opponents to a small number indeed." It was in this spirit, that, in conjunction with his friend (for it was the production of both), in their everyday studies they made up a little book entitled, "The Necessity of Atheism," and had it printed, I believe in London—certainly not at Oxford. This little pamphlet was never offered for sale. It was not addressed to an ordinary reader, but to the metaphysical alone; and it was so short, that it was only designed to point out the line of argument. It was, in truth, a general issue, a compendious denial of every allegation in order to put the whole case in proof. It was a formal mode of saying,—"You affirm so and so,—then prove it." And thus was it understood by his more candid and intelligent correspondents. As it was shorter, so was it plainer, and perhaps, in order to provoke discussion, a little bolder than Hume's Essays—a book which occupies a conspicuous place in the library of every student. The doctrine, if not deserving the name, was precisely similar—the necessary and inevitable consequence of Locke's philosophy, and the theory, that all knowledge is from without.

I will not admit your conclusions, his opponent might answer.—Then you must deny those of Hume.—I deny them.—But you must deny those of Locke also; and we will go back together to Plato. Such was the usual course of argument. Sometimes, however, he rested on mere denial, holding his adversary to strict proof, and deriving strength from his weakness. But those who are anxious to see this syllabus, may find it *totidem verbis* in the notes to Queen Mab.

This syllabus he sent to me among many others, and circulated it largely among the heads of colleges, and professors of the university, forwarding copies it is said to several of the bishops. The author of The Opium Eater says that Shelley put his name to the pamphlet, and the name of his college. The publication was anonymous; but the secret (scarcely made a secret) of the authorship soon transpired. I wish I could also confirm Mr. De Quincy's observation, that Shelley had but just entered his sixteenth year; he was in his nineteenth. Still, however, Shelley was a thoughtless boy at this era, and not a man. The promulgation of this syllabus was a reckless—a mad act.

The consequence might be anticipated. "It was a fine spring morning, on Lady-day, in the year 1811, when," says Mr. H. "I went to Shelley's rooms; he was absent; but before I had collected our books, he rushed in. He was terribly agitated.* I anxiously enquired what had happened: 'I am expelled!' he said, as soon as he had recovered himself a little,—'I am expelled! I was sent for suddenly, a few minutes ago,—I went to the common room, where I found our master and two or three of his fellows. The master produced a copy of the little syllabus, and asked me if I was the author of it; he spoke in a rude, abrupt, and insolent tone; I begged to be informed for what purpose they put the question,—no answer was given, but the master loudly and angrily repeated, 'Are you the author of this book?' 'If I can judge from your manner, I said, 'you are resolved to punish me, if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence; it is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case, and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a Court of Inquisitors; but not free men in a free country.' 'Do you choose to deny that this is your composition?' the master reiterated in the same rude and angry voice.'

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* A pendent to this inquisitorial conduct, may be found in the case of Ronge, the new Reformer, who wrote an article in the "Annales de la Patrie," proclaiming the most ardent sympathy for liberty; and an admiration without bounds for the French revolution. Ronge was summoned by a letter of the Vicar-General of Silesia, to declare whether or not he was the author of the paper in question. Throwing himself on the protection of Prussian laws, that interdict the prosecution of an anonymous author,—at least, where his writings contain no personal scandal, or attacks on the state that may be dangerous,—the curate of Grolkan made this laconic reply, "that his conscience enjoined him silence." Yet without any proof or trial, Ronge was suspended, and condemned to imprisonment.

"Shelley complained much of his violent and ungentlemanlike deportment, saying, 'I have experienced tyranny and injustice before, and I well know what vulgar virulence is, but I never met with such unworthy treatment. I told him calmly, but firmly, that I was determined not to answer any questions respecting the book on the table—he immediately repeated his demand; I persisted in my refusal, and he said, furiously, 'Then you are expelled, and I desire that you will quit the college to-morrow morning at the latest.'

" ' One of the fellows took up two papers, and handed me one of them,—' here it is'—he produced a regular sentence of expulsion drawn up in due form, under the seal of the college.

Shelley was full of spirit and courage, frank and fearless, but he was likewise shy, unpresuming, and eminently sensitive; I have been with him on many trying occasions of his after life, but I never saw him so deeply shocked and so cruelly agitated as on this occasion. A nice sense of honour shrinks from the most distant touch of disgrace—even from the insults of those men whose contumely can bring no shame. He sat on the sofa, repeating with convulsive vehemence the word 'Expelled! Expelled!' his head shaking with emotion, his whole frame quivering.

Speaking of this expulsion, it is to be regretted that his tutor, of whom Mr. H. does not give a very flattering picture, and whom he accuses of denouncing Shelley, did not first attempt to refute his arguments, or this failing, that he had not left the correction of his errors to time and good sense. I had once a conversation with a German Professor, who expressed his astonishment at this laconic fiat, and said, that had Shelley promulgated this Syllabus at any of their universities, he would have found Divines enough to have entered the lists with him, adding, that had not the young collegian been convinced, he would not have drawn from what he deemed intolerance and persecution, an obstinate adherence to his errors, from a belief that his logic was unanswerable.

It might be supposed that it was not without some reluctance, that the master and fellows of University College passed against Shelley this stern decree, (which Mr. Hogg designates as monstrous and illegal), not only on account of his youth and distinguished talents, promising to reflect credit on the college; but because, as I have said, his father had been a member of it, his ancestors its benefactors. I know not if these considerations had any weight with the conclave, but it appears that Shelley was by no means in good odour with the authorities of the college, from the side he took in the election of Lord Grenville, as chancellor, against his competitor, a member of University. Shelley, by his family and connexions, as well as disposition, was attached to the successful party, in common with the whole body of undergraduates, one and all, in behalf of the scholar and liberal statesman. Plain and loud was the avowal of his sentiments, nor were they confined to words, for he published, I think in the *Morning Chronicle*, under the signature of A Master of Arts of Oxford, a letter advocating the claims of Lord Grenville, which, perhaps, might have been detected as his, by the heads of the college. It was a well-written paper, and calculated to produce some effect; and as he expressed himself eminently delighted at the issue of the contest,—"at that wherewith his superiors were offended, he was regarded from the beginning with a jealous eye." Such at least are the impressions of his friend.

The next morning at eight o'clock, Shelley and Mr. H., who had been involved in the same fate, set out together for London on the top of the coach; and with his final departure from the university, the reminiscences of his life at Oxford terminate.

The narration of the injurious effects of this cruel, precipitate, unjust, and illegal expulsion, upon the entire course of his subsequent life, will not be wanting in interest or instruction; of a period, when the scene was changed from the quiet seclusion of academic groves and gardens, and the calm valley of the silvery Isis, to the stormy ocean of that vast and shoreless world, and to the utmost violence of which, he was, at an early age, suddenly and unnaturally abandoned.

I remember, as if it occurred yesterday, his knocking at my door in Garden Court, in the Temple, at four o'clock in the morning, the second day after his expulsion. I think I hear his cracked voice, with his well-known pipe,—

"Medwin, let me in, I am expelled;" here followed a sort of loud, half-hysteric laugh, and a repetition of the words—"I am expelled," with the addition of, "for Atheism." Though greatly shocked, I was not much surprised at the news, having been led to augur such a close to his collegiate career, from the Syllabus and The Posthumous Works of Peg Nicholson, and the bold avowal of his scepticism. My apprehensions, too, of the consequences of this unhappy event, from my knowledge of Sir Timothy's character, were soon confirmed; nor was his partner in misfortune doomed to a milder fate. Their fathers refused to receive them under their roofs. Like the old men in Terence, they compared notes, and hardened each other's hearts. This unmitigable hatred was continued down to the deaths of both. One had not the power of carrying his worldly resentment beyond the grave, but the other not only never forgave, or I believe ever would see his eldest son, (for such he was, and presumptive heir to a large fortune) but cut him off, speaking after the manner of the Roman law, with a shilling.

During Shelley's ostracism, he and his friend took a lodging together, where I visited them, living as best they could. Good arises out of evil. Both owe, perhaps, to this expulsion, their celebrity; one has risen to an eminence as a lawyer, which he might never have attained, and the other has made himself a name which will go down to posterity with those of Milton and Byron.

At this time Shelley was ever in a dreamy state, and he told me he was in the habit of noting down his dreams. The first day, he said, they amounted to a page, the next to two, the third to several, till at last they constituted the greater part of his existence; realising Calderon's *Sueno e Sueno.* One morning he told me he was satisfied of the existence of two sorts of dreams, the Phrenic and the Psychic; and that he had witnessed a singular phenomenon, proving that the mind and the soul were separate and different entities—that it had more than once happened to him to have a dream, which the mind was pleasantly and actively developing; in the midst of which, it was broken off by a dream within a dream—a dream of the soul, to which the mind was not privy; but that from the effect it produced—the start of horror with which he waked, must have been terrific. It is no wonder that, making a pursuit of dreams, he should have left some as a catalogue of the phenomena of dreams, as connecting sleeping and waking.

"I distinctly remember," he says, "dreaming several times, between the intervals of two or three years, the same precise dream. It was not so much what is ordinarily called a dream: The single image, unconnected with all other images, of a youth who was educated at the same school with myself, presented itself in sleep. Even now, after a lapse of many years, I can never hear the name of this youth, without the three places where I dreamed of him presenting themselves distinctly to my mind." And again, "in dreams, images acquire associations peculiar to dreaming; so that the idea of a particular house, when it occurs a second time in dreams, will have relation with the idea of the same house in the first time, of a nature entirely different from that which the house excites when seen or thought of in relation to waking ideas."

His systematising of dreams, and encouraging, if I may so say, the habit of dreaming, by this journal, which he then kept, revived in him his old somnambulism. As an instance of this, being in Leicester Square one morning at five o'clock, I was attracted by a group of boys collected round a well-dressed person lying near the rails. On coming up to them, my curiosity being excited, I descried Shelley, who had unconsciously spent a part of the night *sub dio.* He could give me no account of how he got there.

We took during the spring frequent walks in the Parks, and on the banks of the Serpentine. He was fond of that classical recreation, as it appears by a fragment from some comic drama of

Æschylus, of making "ducks and drakes," counting with the utmost glee the number of bounds, as the flat stones flew skimming over the surface of the water; nor was he less delighted with floating down the wind, paper boats, in the constructing of which, habit had given him a wonderful skill. He took as great interest in the sailing of his frail vessels as a ship-builder may do in that of his vessels—and when one escaped the dangers of the winds and waves, and reached in safety the opposite shore, he would run round to hail the safe termination of its voyage. Mr. H. gives a very pleasant account of Shelley's fondness for this sort of navigation, and on one occasion, wearied with standing shivering on the bank of the canal, said, "'Shelley, there is no use in talking to you, you are the Demiurgus of Plato.' He instantly caught up the whole flotilla he was preparing, and bounding homewards with mighty strides, laughed aloud,—laughed like a giant, as he used to say."

Singular contrast to the profound speculations in which he was engaged. He now, rankling with the sense of wrong, and hardened by persecution, and the belief that the logic of his Syllabus had been unrespected because it could not be shaken, applied himself more closely than ever to that Sceptical philosophy, which he had begun to discard for Plato, and would, but for his expulsion, have soon entirely adandoned. He reverted to his Queen Mab, commenced a year and a half before, and converted what was a mere imaginative poem into a systematic attack on the institutions of society. He not only corrected the versification with great care, but more than doubled its length, and appended to the text the Notes, which were at that time scarcely, if at all begun. The intolerance of the members of a religion, which should be that of love and charity and long-suffering, in his own case, made him throw the odium on the creed itself; and he argues that it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission, and adds, that a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man, who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than that of his aggressor, who daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator."

Like a man dominated by a fixed idea, Shelley's reading, in the concoction of these notes, was one-sided. In addition to Hume's Essays,* which were his hand-book,—and I remember ridiculing the chapter entitled a Sceptical Solution of Sceptical Doubts, asking him what could be made of a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts?—he dug out of the British Museum, Voltaire, Spinosa,

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* The dilemma in which Hume placed Philosophy delighted him. He at that time thought the sceptical mode of reasoning unanswerable. Berkley denied the existence of matter, or rather of the substratum of matter. Hume, going deeper, endeavoured to show mind a figment. Berkley says Hume professes in his title-page to have composed his book against sceptics as well as Atheists and Freethinkers; but all his arguments, though otherwise intended, are in reality sceptical, as appears from this, that they admit of no answer, and produce no conviction.

Volney, Godwin's Political Justice and Enquirer, and many other French and English works, to suit his purpose, and in the course of the year printed that extraordinary talented poem of which I have already spoken at much length, and shall still frequently have to allude to.

In the autumn, the rage of Shelley's father having somewhat cooled down, he was received at home, but the reconciliation was hollow and insincere. Sir Timothy, who, proud of his son's talents, had looked forward to his acquiring high academical distinctions, felt deeply, not so much the disgrace of the expulsion, as an apprehension that the circumstance might tend heareafter to affect the brilliant worldly career he had etched out for his heir, marring his prospct of filling the seat in parliament which he then occupied, and intended one day to resign in favour of Percy Bysshe. But it is doubtful if Shelley would, with all his eloquence, have made a politician. He shrunk with an unconquerable dislike from political articles; he never could be induced to read one. The Duke of Norfolk, who was a friend of his father, and to whom his grandfather owed his title, often engaged him, when dining, as he occasionally did, in St. James's Square, to turn his thoughts towards politics.—"You cannot direct your attention too early to them," said the Duke. "They are the proper career of a young man of ability and of your station in life. That career is most advantageous, because it is a monopoly. A little success in that line goes far, since the number of competitors is limited, and of those who are admitted to the contest, the greater part are wholly devoid of talent, or too indolent to exert themselves. So many are excluded, that of the few who are permitted to enter, it is difficult to find any that are not utterly unfit for the ordinary service of the state. It is not so in the church; it is not so at the bar. There all may offer themselves. In letters your chance of success is still worse—there none can win gold, and all may try to gain reputation—it is a struggle for glory, the competition is infinite;—there are no bounds;—that is a spacious field indeed, a sea without a shore."

This holding up of politics as the το καλον, was natural in one, who had renounced and recanted his faith for political power. I was present at a great dinner of Whigs, where one of them, an M. P., speaking of the nominees of election committees, who act as advocates on the side of their nominators, though they take the same oath as the other members of the committee, and his saying how easy it was for a man determined to *believe*, bending his mind to believe any thing, *alias*, making up his mind beforehand how he should vote. Such casuistry would have been lost on Shelley, to whom I detailed these sentiments, which he highly reprobated. The Duke of Norfolk talked to him many times, in order to convert him to politics, but in vain.

Shelley used to say that he had heard people talk politics by the hour, and how he hated it and them. He carried this aversion through life, and never have I seen him read a newspaper, incredible as it may appear to those who pass half their lives in this occupation.

Mr. Hogg remarks, that, "had he resolved to enter the career of politics, it is possible that habit would have reconciled him to many things which at first seemed repugnant to his nature; it is possible that his unwearied industry, his remarkable talents, and vast energy, would have led to renown in that line as well as any other, but it is most probable that his parliamentary success would have been but moderate; but he struck out a path for himself, by which boldly following his own course, greatly as it deviated from that prescribed to him, he became more illustrious than he would have been had he steadily pursued the beaten track. His memory will be green when the herd of every-day politicians are forgotten. Ordinary rules may guide ordinary men, but the orbit of the child of genius is especially eccentric."

Sir Timothy was a man entertaining high notions of genitorial rights, but of a very capricious temper; at one moment too indulgent, at another tyrannically severe to his children. He was subject to the gout, and during its paroxysms, it was almost dangerous to approach him, and he would often throw the first thing that came to hand at their heads. Shelley seems to allude to him, when he says,—

> * I'll tell the truth, he was a man,
> Hard, selfish, loving only gold—
> Yet full of guile his *pale* eyes ran
> With tears which each some falsehood told,
> And oft his smooth and bridled tongue
> Would give the lie to his flushing cheek.
>
> * * * *
>
> He was a tyrant to the weak,
> On whom his vengeance he would wreak,
> For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,
> From many a stranger's eye would dart,
> And on his memory cling, and follow
> His soul to its home so cold and hollow.
> He was a tyrant to the weak!
> And *we* were *such*, alas the day!
> Oft when his little ones at play,
> Were in youth's natural lightness gay,
> Or if they listened to some tale
> Of travellers, or of fairy land,
> When the light from the woodfire's dying brand
> Flushed on their faces, and they heard,
> Or thought they heard, upon the stair
> His footsteps, the suspended word
> Died on their lips—so each grew pale.

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* Rosalind and Helen.—Page 208.

Talent is said to be in some degree hereditary, and I have often heard it questioned from whom Shelley derived his genius—undoubtedly not from his father, who was so deficient that he never addressed a public meeting without committing some *contratems*, and could not in his legislative capacity have made an observation that would not have been accompanied by a laugh at "the country gentleman." His mother was, to use the words of a popular writer, "if not a literary, an intellectual woman, that is, in a certain sense a clever woman, and though of all persons most unpoetical, was possessed of strong masculine sense, a keen observation of character, which if it had had a wider field, might have made her a Madame de Sevigne, or a Lady Wortley Montague, for she wrote admirable letters; but judging of men and things by the narrow circle in which she moved, she took a narrow and cramped view of both, and was as little capable of understanding Shelley, as a peasant would be of comprehending Berkley."

Every man of talent, full of new ideas, and dominated by a system, as he was, has his peculiar idiotisms; the more expansive his genius, the more startling are the eccentricities that constitute the different degrees of his originality. "*En Province un original passe pour un homme a moietè fou*," says a witty French writer. A prophet is no prophet in his own country, and few men are so fortunate as was Mahomet, to make converts in their own family—certain it is, that Shelley's never valued or appreciated his character, or his surpassing genius. Sir Timothy had no respect for learning but as a means of worldly advancement—a stepping-stone to political power. After Percy Bysshe's expulsion, he took a hatred to books, and even carried his animosity to education so far that he never employed a steward who could read or write. He was an enemy to the instruction of the children of the poor, and on the occasion of his younger son's going to school, said to him, "You young rascal, don't you be like your brother. Take care you don't learn too much;" a piece of advice very palatable to boys, and which, doubtless, the promising youth fulfilled to the letter, with filial obedience.

But if Shelley's expulsion rudely severed all domestic ties—alienated the hearts of his parents from him—it was a blight to all his hopes, the rock on which all the prospects of wedded happiness split. Further communication with Miss Grove was prohibited; and he had the heartrending agony of soon knowing that she was lost to him for ever. Byron's whole life is said to have received its bias from love—from his blighted affection for Miss Chaworth. There was a similarity in the fates of the two poets; but the effects were different: Byron sought for refuge in dissipation, and gave vent to his feelings in satire. He looked upon the world as his enemy, and visited what he deemed the wrong of one, on his species at large. Shelley, on the contrary, with the goodness of a noble mind, sought by a more enlarged philosophy to dull the edge of his own miseries, and in the sympathy of a generous and amiable nature for the sufferings of his kind, to find relief and solace for a disappointment which in Byron had only led to wilful exaggeration of its own despair. Shelley, on this trying occasion, had the courage to live, in order that he might labour for one great object, the advancement of the human race, and the amelioration of society, and strengthened himself in a resolution to devote his energies to this ultimate end, being prepared to endure every obloquy, to make any sacrifice for its accomplishment; and would, if necessary, have died for the cause. He had the ambition, thus early manifested, of becoming a reformer; for one Sunday, after we had been to Rowland Hill's chapel, and were dining together in the city, he wrote to him under an assumed name, proposing to preach to his congregation. Of course he received no answer. Had he applied to Carlisle or Owen, perhaps the reply would have been affirmative. But he had perhaps scarcely heard of their names or doctrines, even if they had commenced their career.

It is possible that Shelley wrongly classified that excellent and worthy man, Rowland Hill, who had renounced the advantages of birth and position for the good of his species, with the ranting Methodists, or violent demagogues of the time ; in all probability, he had never even heard of him before that day, when he stood amid the crowd that overflowed the chapel through the open door. It was at best a foolish and inconsiderate act—and can only be excused from his total ignorance of the character of Rowland Hill, and the nature of his preaching.

That Shelley's disappointment in love affected him acutely, may be seen by some lines inscribed erroneously, "On F. G.," instead of "H. G.," and doubtless of a much earlier date than assigned by Mrs. Shelley to the fragment :—

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
  Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came,—and I departed,
  Heeding not the words then spoken—
Misery ! O misery !
This world is all too wide for thee !

Shelley's residence with his family was become, for the reasons I have stated, so irksome to him, that he soon took refuge in London, from

> "His cold fireside and alienated home."

I have found a clue, to develope the mystery of how he became acquainted with Miss Westbrook. The father, who was in easy circumstances, kept an hotel in London, and sent his daughter to a school at Balam Hill, where Shelley's second sister made one of the boarders. It so happened, that as Shelley was walking in the garden of this seminary, Miss Westbrook past them. She was a handsome blonde, not then sixteen. Shelley was so struck with her beauty, that after his habit of writing, as in the case of Felicia Browne and others, to ladies who interested him, he contrived, through the intermediation of his sister, to carry on a correspondence with her. The intimacy was not long in ripening. The young lady was nothing loth to be wooed, and after a period of only a few weeks, it was by a sort of knight-errantry that Shelley carried her off from Chapel-street, Grosvenor-square, where she sorely complained of being subject to great oppression from her sister and father. Whether this was well or ill-founded, is little to the purpose to enquire. Probably, Shelley and Miss Harriett Westbrook—there might have been some magic in the name of Harriett—had not met half a dozen times at all before the elopement; they were totally unacquainted with each other's dispositions, habits, or pursuits; and took a rash step, that none but a mere boy and girl would have taken. Well might it be termed an ill-judged and ill-assorted union,—bitter were destined to be its fruits.

All the circumstances relative to the progress of this affair, he kept a profound secret, nor in any way alluded to it in any correspondence, nor was it even guessed at by Dr. Grove, in whose house he was lodging; nor on parting with Shelley at Horsham, the day before his departure, when he borrowed some money of my father, did he throw out a hint on the subject. Authors make the strangest matches. It was at the end of August, 1811, that the youthful pair set out to Gretna Green, where they were united after the formula, which, as we have lately had so circumstantial an account of the ceremony, I shall not repeat, though he many years after detailed it to me, with other particulars not therein included. From thence the "new-married couple" betook themselves to Edinburgh. Their stay in that city was short; for by a letter dated Cuckfield, the residence of an uncle, of the 21 Oct, 1811, he says,—"In the course of three weeks or a month, I shall take the precaution of being remarried." In fact, he did execute that intention. This uncle, the gallant Captain Pilford, whose name is well known in his country's naval annals, (for he was in the battle of the Nile, and he commanded a frigate at that of Trafalgar, and was the friend of Nelson) supplied the place of a father to Shelley, receiving him at his house when abandoned and cast off by Sir Timothy, who, if irritated at Shelley's expulsion from Oxford, was rendered furious by the *mesalliance*, and cut off his allowance altogether.

By the advice of Captain Pilfold, who supplied Shelley with money for his immediate necessity, he sought in a distant county some cheap abode, and proceeded to Cumberland.

I have before me two letters from Keswick —in that dated Nov. 26th, 1811, he says,—

"We are now in this lovely spot where for for a time we have fixed our residence; the rent of our cottage, furnished, is £1 10s. per week. We do not intend to take up our abode here for a perpetuity, but should wish to have a house in Sussex. Perhaps you could look out for one for us. Let it be in some picturesque, retired place,—St. Leonard's Forest, for instance; let it not be nearer to London than Horsham, nor near any populous manufacturing, dissipated town; we do not covet either a propinquity to barracks. Is there any possible method of raising money without any exorbitant interest, until my coming of age? I hear that you and my father have had a rencontre; I was surprised he dared attack you; but men always hate those whom they have injured; this hatred was, I suppose, a stimulus which supplied the place of courage Whitton has written to me, to state the impropriety of my letter to my mother and sister; this letter I have returned with a passing remark on the back of it. I find that affair on which those letters spoke, is become the general gossip of the idle newsmongers of Horsham—they give me credit for having invented it. They do my invention much honour, but greatly discredit their own penetration."

The affair here referred to is little to the purpose; but during Sir Timothy's absence in London, on his parliamentary duties, Lady Shelley invited Shelley to Field Place, where he was received, to use his own words, with much *shew-affection*. Some days after he had been there, his mother produced a parchment deed, which she asked him to sign, to what purport I know not; but he declined so doing, and which he told me he would have signed, had he not seen through the false varnish of hypocritical caresses. This anecdote is not idle gossip—but comes from Shelley himself.

The second letter bears date, Keswick, Nov. 30th, 1811.

"When I last saw you, you mentioned the imprudence of raising money even at my present age, at 7 per cent. We are now so poor as to be actually in danger of being every day deprived of the necessaries of life. I would thank you to remit me a small sum for immediate expenses. Mr. Westbrook has sent a small sum, with an intimation that we are to expect no more; this suffices for the immediate discharge of a few debts, and it is nearly with our last guinea that we visit the Duke of Norfolk at Greystoke; to-morrow we return to Keswick. I have very few hopes from this visit; that reception into Abraham's bosom, (meaning a reconciliation with his father) appeared to me, to be the consequence of some infamous concessions, which are, I suppose, synonymous with *duty*. Love to all."

The overture, of which the Duke was the intermediary, seems to have failed. His Grace had written to several gentlemen amongst his agricultural friends in Cumberland, requesting them to pay such neighbourly attentions to the solitary young people, as circumstances might place in their power; Southey, with his usual kindness, and the ladies of his family, immediately called on him.

Speaking of his sojourn to Leigh Hunt, he says, "Do you know that when I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkley, from Mr. Lloyd, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute; one especially struck me, as being the assertion of a doctrine, of which even then I had been long persuaded, and on which I had founded much of my persuasions as regarded the imagined cause of the universe: 'Mind cannot create, it can only perceive.'"

The beauty of the lakes, which were ever fresh in Shelley's memory, made a powerful impression on his imagination; and he would have wished to have fixed himself there, but found Cumberland any thing but a cheap place—or for eight months in the year, anything but a sequestered one. Where he fixed his abode, was in part of a house standing about half a mile out of Keswick, on the Penrith road, which they had been induced to take by one of their new friends; (probably Southey), more, says De Quincey, I believe in that friend's intention, for the sake of bringing them easily within his hospitalities, than for any beauty in the place. There was, however, a pretty garden attached to it; and whilst walking in this, one of the Southey party asked Mrs. Shelley if the garden had been let with this part of the house? "Oh no!" she replied, "the garden is not ours, but then you know the people let us run about in it, whenever Percy and I are tired of sitting in the house." The *naivetè* of this expression, "run about," contrasting so picturesquely with the intermitting efforts of the girlish wife at supporting a matron-like gravity, now that she was doing the honours of her house to married ladies, caused all the party to smile. De Quincey says, that he might have placed some neighbourly advantages at Shelley's disposal—Grassmere, for instance, itself at that time, where, tempted by a beauty that had not been sullied, Wordsworth then lived,—in Grassmere, Elleray, and Professor Wilson nine miles further,—finally, his own library, which being rich in the wickedest of German speculations, would naturally have been more to Shelley's taste than the Spanish library of Southey. "But," says De Quincey, "all these temptations were negatived for Shelley by his sudden departure. Off he went in a hurry, but why he went, or whither he went, I did not inquire." Why he went is explained by the letter of Nov. 30th: his being so poor as to be actually in danger of every day being deprived of the necessaries of life—his visiting the Duke of Norfolk with his last guinea. That he was enabled to quit Keswick was owing to a small advance of money made him by my father. De Quincey was altogether mistaken in saying that his wife's father had made over to him an annual income of £200 a-year, as proved by the words, Mr. Westbrook has sent a small sum, with an intimation that we are to expect no more." Shelley had heard that Ireland was a cheap country, and without any leavestaking, betook himself to Cork, and after visiting the lakes, of Killarney, where he was enchanted with the arbutus-covered islands that stud it—lakes, he used to say, more beautiful than those of Switzerland or Italy,—came to Dublin. Ireland was then, as ever, in a disturbed condition, and with an enthusiasm for liberty, and sympathy for the sufferings of that misgoverned people, whose wretched cabins and miserable fare, shared in common with their companions, the swine, he had beheld with pity and disgust during his tour, it was natural that he should take a lively interest in bettering their condition. He attended some public meetings, where he displayed that eloquence for which he was remarkable, and which would doubtless have distinguished him, had he embarked in a political career in the senate. Nor did he confine himself to speeches. In a letter dated from No. 17, Grafton Street, of the date of the 10th March, 1812, he says, "I am now engaged with a literary friend in the publication of a voluminous History of Ireland, of which 250 pages are already printed, and for the completion of which, I wish to raise £250; I could obtain undeniable security for its payment at the expiration of eighteen months. Can you tell me how I ought to proceed? The work will produce great profits." Who his coadjutor was I know not; but it would seem that the History of Ireland was abandoned for a pamphlet on the state of the country, which he sent me. It was rather a book than a pamphlet, closely and cheaply printed, very ill-digested, but abounding in splendid passages. The tenor of it was by no means violent, and, I remember well, suggested a policy which has been since so successfully adopted by the great *agitating Pacificator*,—a policy which Shelley laid down in one of his letters many years afterwards, where he says:—"The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy, and inculcate with fervour, both the right of resistance, and the duty of forbearance. You know my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, for ever aspiring to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who are ready to be partially satisfied with all that is practicable."

A friend of mine in Dublin has searched among the innumerable pamphlets in the public library there, for this, but in vain. It was a straw that has doubtless been carried down the current and lost.

His departure from Ireland was occasioned, as he told me, by a hint from the police, and he in haste took refuge in the Isle of Man—that then *imperium in imperio*, that extrajudical place, where the debtor was safe from his creditor, and the political refugee found an asylum in his obscurity from the myrmidons of the law. He remained, however, at Douglas but a short time, and on his passage to some port in Wales, had a very narrow escape from his fatal element. He had embarked in a small trading vessel which had only three hands on board. It was the month of November, and the weather, boisterous when they left the harbour, increased to a dreadful gale. The skipper attributed to Shelley's exertions, so much the safety of the vessel, that he refused on landing to accept his fare.

"After all these, and many other wanderings, we find Shelley at Rhayader, Radnorshire. Its vicinity to Combe Ellen, (which Bowles has immortalised) the residence of his cousin, Thomas Grove, probably led him to desire to fix himself in that neighbourhood, and he selected Nantzwillt. In a letter dated April 25th, 1812, he expresses a desire to take a lease of the place, and says,—"So eligible an opportunity for settling in a cheap, retired, romantic spot, will scarcely occur again." But how was he to purchase the stock of two hundred acres of ground, and pay a rent of ninety-eight pounds a year? In fact he soon perceived the incompetency of his means for such an undertaking. It was after this period, that he settled himself in a cottage belonging to Mr. Maddocks, in Caernarvonshire. Shelley was of opinion, that for some time after he had left Ireland, he was under the *surveillance* of the police, and that his life was in danger from its emissaries; doubtless, a most erroneous notion, but one which the total sequestration, and wild solitude of the country, contributed to render an *idée fixe*.

I knew Mr. Maddocks well, and had many conversations with him at Florence as to a circumstance that occurred, or which Shelley supposed did occur, in North Wales. The horrors of the inn in "Count Fathom," were hardly surpassed by the recital Shelley used to make of this scene. The story as dictated by him was simply this :—At midnight, sitting alone in his study on the ground floor, he heard a noise at the window, saw one of the shutters gradually unclosed, and a hand advanced into the room armed with a pistol. The muzzle was directed towards him, the aim taken, the weapon cocked, and the trigger drawn. The trigger missed fire. Shelley, with that personal courage which particularly distinguished him, rushed out in order to discover and seize the assassin. As he was in the act of passing through the outer door, at the entrance of an avenue leading into the garden, he found himself face to face with the ruffian, whose pistol missed fire a second time. This opponent he described as a short, stout, powerful man. Shelley, though slightly built, was tall, and though incapable of supporting much fatigue, and seeming evidently weak, had the faculty in certain moments of evoking extraordinary powers, and concentrating all his energies to a given point. This singular phenomenon, which has been noticed in others, he displayed on this occasion; and it made the aggressor and Shelley no unequal match. It was a contest between mind and matter, between intellectual and brute force. After long and painful wrestling, the victory was fast declaring itself for moral courage, which his antagonist perceiving, extricated himself from his grasp, darted into the grounds, and disappeared among the shrubbery. Shelley made a deposition the next day before the magistrate, Mr. Maddocks, of these facts. An attempt to murder caused a great sensation in that part of the principality, where not even a robbery had taken place for several years. No solution could be found for the enigma; and the opinion generally was that the whole was a nightmare—a horrid dream, the effect of an overheated imagination. The savage wildness of the scenery—the entire isolation of the place—the profound metaphysical speculations in which Shelley was absorbed—the want of sound and wholesome reading, and the ungeniality of his companions (for he had one besides his wife, a spinster of a certain age for a humble companion to her)—all combined to foster his natural bent for the visionary, and confirm Mr. Maddocks's idea, that the events of that horrible night were a delusion. This lady, who had accompanied the young couple from Sussex, where she kept a school, was an *esprit fort, ceruleanly blue*, and fancied herself a poetess. I only know one anecdote of her, which Shelley used to relate, laughing till the tears ran down his cheek. She perpetrated an ode, proving that she was a great stickler for the rights of her sex, the first line of which ran thus:—

"All, all are men—*women* and all!"

He himself appears to have written nothing in Wales, if we except some stanzas breathing a tone of deep despondency, of which I will quote four lines:—

"Away, away to thy sad and silent home,
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth,
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth."

Mr. Maddocks, like all who really knew Shelley, perfectly idolised him. I have often heard him dilate on his numerous acts of benevolence, his relieving the distresses of the poor, visiting them in their humble abodes, and supplying them with food and raiment and fuel during the winter, which on that bleak coast, exposed to the north, is particularly severe. But he laid Mr. Maddocks under a debt of gratitude that could never be repaid.

During his temporary absence in a distant county in England, an extraordinary high tide menaced that truly Dutch work, his embankment against the sea, by which he had rescued from it many thousand acres. Shelley, always ready to be of service to his friends, and anxious to save the dyke from destruction, which would have involved his landlord and hundreds in ruin, heading a paper with a subscription of £500, took it himself all round the neighbourhood, and raised a considerable sum, which, enabling him to employ hundreds of workmen, stopped the progress of the waves. I cite this as a proof of his active benevolence. His heart and purse were, almost to improvidence, open to all.

Some one said of another, that he would have divided his last sixpence with a friend; Shelley would have given it all to a stranger in distress. I have no clue to discover in what manner he contrived to find money for this subscription, or for the acts of charity here detailed. It must have been raised at some great sacrifice.

After a year's abode in the Principality, Shelley betook himself to London, where he arrived in the spring of 1813. In a letter dated 21st June, Cooke's hotel, Dover-street, he says, "Depend on it that no artifice of my father's shall seduce me to take a life interest in the estate; I feel with sufficient force, that I should not by such conduct be guilty alone of injustice to myself, but to those who have assisted me by kind offices and advice during my adversity."

In another letter, dated the same month, he says, "The late negociations between myself and my father have been abruptly broken off by the latter. This I do not regret, as his caprice and intolerance would not have suffered the wound to heal." These letters were addressed to my father, and a relation of mine, who visited him at his hotel, and dined with him on the 6th of July, 1813, says that he was become from principle and habit a Pythagorean, and confined himself strictly to a vegetable diet. He was always abstemious, but had completely renounced wine.

Mrs. Shelley was confined of a daughter at this hotel. He was at that time in great pecuniary straits, which it seems that Sir Timothy did nothing to alleviate; on the contrary, was hardened to his necessities, by which he hoped to profit in the hard bargain which he was endeavouring, as it appears, to exact from him. His privations must have been extreme, during the ensuing winter and spring ; for his lawyer says in a letter, dated April, 1814,—"Mr. Shelley is entitled to a considerable landed property in Sussex, under a family settlement, but which is previously liable to the life estates of his grandfather and father, both of whom are living ; upon which property, as his family cannot, during the lifetime of his grandfather, assist him, he has used the utmost of his endeavours to raise money for the payment of his debts, *without success*." How he continued under these circumstances to exist, I know not, but in the Spring of 1814, a separation took place by mutual consent between himself and wife, and she was delivered over to the care of her father and sister, then resident in Bath, whither Mr. Westbrook had retired on giving up business.

In looking back to this marriage of Shelley's with an individual neither adapted to his conditionin life, nor fitted for his companionship by accomplishments or manners, it is surprising, not that it should have ended in a separation, but that for so long a time, (for time is not to be calculated by years,) he should have continued to drag on a chain, every link of which was a protraction of torture.

It was not without mature deliberation, and a conviction common to both, of their utter incapacity of rendering the married state bearable to each other, that they came to a resolve, which, the cold, formal English world, with its conventionalities, under any circumstances short of legally proved infidelity, stamps as a dereliction of duty on the side of the man. Ours is the only country where the yoke of marriage, when it is an iron one, weighs down and crushes those who have once thrown it over their necks. It may be compared to the leaden mantle in the Inferno. It is true that the Roman Catholic religion in some countries, such as Italy and France, except by the express permission, rarely obtained, (though it was in the case of the Countess Guiccioli,) of the Pope, does not allow divorces; but separations, tantamount to them, constantly take place by mutual agreement, without placing the parties in a false position as regards society. Spain has emancipated herself from the inextricability of the chain. In Poland and Russia remarriages are of daily occurrence. But let us look into Protestant lands, for we are yet Protestants, and we shall find that in most of the states in Germany, nothing is easier than to dissolve the tie. The marriage laws in Prussia are very liberal. In Norway the parties cannot be disunited under three years. In Sweden one year's notice suffices. But with us, not even confirmed insanity is sufficient to dissolve a marriage! Our laws admit of but one ground for divorces, and who with any fine feeling would like to drag through the mire of public infamy, her who had once been dear to him—the mother, perhaps, of his children? How long will our statute-book continue to uphold this barbarous and unnatural law, on the very doubtful plea, according to Dr. Wheatley and others, that marriage is of divine institution—a law a disgrace to our civilization, the source of more miseries than all "that flesh is heir to?"

Ill-omened and most unfortunate, indeed, was the union! He had joined himself to one utterly incapable of estimating his talents—one destitute of all delicacy of feeling, who made his existence

"A blight and a curse;"

one who had "a heart, hard and cold,"

"Like weight of icy stone,
That crushed and withered his."

It is in his own writings, and from them his life may be drawn as in a mirror, that the best insight is to be found of the character of the first Mrs. Shelley. He calls her

"A mate with feigned sighs,
Who fled in the April hour."

In the bitterness of his soul, he exclaims:

"Alas! that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one;
Such one I sought in vain,—then black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone."

And we find her in the Epipsychidion thus allegorised:

> "Then one whose voice was venomed melody
> Sate by a well, under blue nightshade-bowers.
> Her touch was as electric poison—flame
> Out of her looks into my vitals came,
> And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
> A killing air that pierced like honeydew
> Into the core of my green heart, and lay
> Upon its leaves, until as *hair grown grey*
> *On a young brow*, they hid its unblown prime
> With ruins of unseasonable time."

The beautiful fragment on Love which appeared originally in the Athenæum, and may be found among the Prose Works, proves with what a lacerated heart he poured out his love, in aspiration for an object who could sympathise with his; and how pathetically does he paint his yearning after such a being, when he says:—

"I know not the internal constitutionof other men. I see that in some external attributes they resemble me; but when misled by that appearance, I have thought to appeal to something in common, and unburthen my inmost soul, I have found my language misunderstood, like one in a desert and savage land. The more opportunities they have afforded me for experience, the wider has appeared the interval between us, and to a greater distance have the points of sympathy been withdrawn. With a spirit ill fitted to sustain such proofs, trembling and feeble through its tenderness, I have everywhere sought sympathy, and found only repulse and disappointment." And after a description of what he did seek for in this union, he adds, "Sterne says, that if he were in a desert, he would love some cypress." No sooner is this want or power dead, than man becomes the living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere wreck of what he was."

The disappointed hopes that gave birth to this eloquence of passion, may be more than conjectured. To love, to be beloved, became an insatiable famine of his nature, which the wide circle of the universe, comprehending beings of such inexhaustible variety and stupendous magnitude of excellence, appeared too narrow and confined to satiate.

It was with the recollection of these withered feelings, that he afterwards, in his desolation, thus apostrophised a wild swan that rose from a morass in the wilderness:—

> "*Thou* hast a home,
> Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine home!
> Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
> With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
> Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy."

The example of the most surpassing spirits that have ever appeared, Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton, proves that poets have been most unfortunate in their matrimonial choice, not, as Moore would endeavour to establish, because such are little fitted for the wedded state, but because in the condition of society, which Shelley characterises as "a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilisation," women are unequally educated, and are hence on an inequality with men, and unable to form a just estimate of their genius, or to make allowances for those eccentricities of genius, those deviations from the standard of common minds which they have set up.

Mr. Moore is a married man, and as such his opinion is worth quoting, though I cannot agree with him in his deductions, that poets should never marry. He says, that "those who have often felt in themselves a call to matrimony, have kept aloof from such ties, and the exercise of the softer duties and rewards of *being amiable* reserved themselves for the high and hazardous chances of being great." He adds, that "to follow poetry, one must forget father and mother, and cling to it alone;" and he compares marriage to "the wormwood star, whose light filled the waters on which it fell, with bitterness."

But if a poetical temperament unfits *man*kind from entering into the married state, and if those who possess it are to be debarred from those sympathies which are the only leaven in the dull dough of mortality,—if they are to be made responsible for all the misery of which such unions are often the fertile source, it would, in his view, be only fair to consider that poetesses are to be visited with a similar measure of reproach; and, alas! how many of the female writers of this and former days, have found marriage anything but a bed of roses! Charlotte Smith, L. E. L., Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Norton, stand at the head of the long catalogue with us. In America, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Sigourney. In Germany, beginning with the Karschin, their name is legion. In France, two examples suffice —De Stael and George Sand. Were they alone to blame? Who will venture to cast the first stone at them? Surely not Mr. Moore, who is too *gallant*, and too fond of the sex, to raise a whisper against their good fame? Lady Byron also is a poetess,—good, bad, or indifferent,— and on the principle, that acids neutralise each other, that remarkable case ought, on the principle of the homœopathic system, to have proved an exception to the general rule, instead of being the rule itself.

The last name calls up a whole Iliad of woes. Yes, true it is, and "pity 'tis, 'tis true," that two other poets must be added to the number of the unfortunates,—two the greatest of our times, Shelley and Byron. The world has long given up troubling itself about the causes of the domestic differences of "the three gods of poetry," as they soon will about those of the two last; ceasing, ere long, to canvass Byron's feverish existence, to speculate on his intrigues, or to think about Lady Byron or the first Mrs. Shelley, more than it now does la Signora Dante, Mrs. Shakspeare, or Mrs. Milton. But there was this difference in the destinies of the two poet-friends: Byron was separated from Lady Byron, by Lady Byron, against his will, after a short trial,—less than twelve months; Shelley and his wife parted by mutual consent, after a much longer test of the incompatibility of their tempers, and incapacity to render the duration of their union anything but an intolerable tyranny; and it must not be forgotten, too, that isolation from society made them perfectly acquainted with each other's dispositions and habits and pursuits. In both cases the world ranged itself on the weaker side; but if Byron had his measure of reproach and defamation, Shelley was persecuted with a more exceeding amount of obloquy, driven from his native land, placed under a ban by his friends and relations, and considered, as he says, "a rare prodigy of crime and pollution." It is true that a tragic circumstance arose out of his separation, over which I could have wished, were it possible, to draw a veil; but as that may not be, and though by an anachronism, as I shall have no further occasion to mention the first Mrs. Shelley, now advert to it.—She cut off her days by suicide.

De Quincey, speaking of this dreadful event, says, "It is one chief misery of a beautiful young woman separated from her natural protector, that her desolate situation attracts and stimulates the calumnies of the malicious. Stung by these calumnies," he adds, "and oppressed, as I have understood, by the loneliness of her abode, she threw herself into a pond and was drowned." Now it must be remembered that the separation took place in the beginning of 1813, and that the catastrophe occurred nearly three years afterwards,—a long period for her to have brooded over her wrongs or misfortunes before they produced such frightful effects. Her fate was a dreadful misfortune to her who perished, and him who survived.

I have said in the "Shelley Papers," that it is impossible to acquit Shelley of all blame in this calamity. From his knowledge of her character, he must have been aware, as has been said by another, "that she was an individual unadapted to an exposure to principles of action, which if even pregnant with danger when of self-organisation, are doubly so when communicated to minds altogether unfit for their reception;" and he should have kept an eye over her conduct.

But I have since had reason, from undoubted authority, to change this opinion. On their separation, he delivered her back into the hands of her father and eldest sister. He told them almost in these words, that "his wife and himself had never loved each other; that to continue to drag on the chain, would only be a protraction of torture to both, and that as they could not legally extricate themselves from the Gordian knot, they had mutually determined to cut it. That he wished her all happiness, and should endeavour by sympathy with another, to seek it himself. He added, that having received no fortune with her, and her father being in easy circumstances, he was not at the moment able to make her the allowance he could wish; that the sum he then gave her, was all he could command; that as the child was an infant, he should for a time leave it in their hands, and care; but should at a more advanced age, claim it; and they parted on good terms, though not without reproaches and harsh language from the father.

Little or no blame as to the melancholy catastrophe that succeeded, could therefore be imputed to Shelley; *that* must fall on her relations, who with the knowledge of her character and conduct, by advice, or other measures, ought to have watched over both. Having once confided her to their superintendence, he might consider, with many others similarly circumstanced, that his responsibility was over. That he did not do so, his compunction, which brought on a temporary derangement, proves. De Quincey, in speaking of this circumstance, to which I alluded in a memoir of Shelley, says that the mention of it arose from a wish to gratify a fugitive curiosity in strangers; and adds, that it appears from the peace of mind which Shelley is reported afterwards to have recovered for a time, that he could not have had to reproach himself with any harshness or neglect as contributing to the shocking catastrophe. Without any compunctious visitings, however, morbidly sensitive as he was, well might it painfully excite him. Such a fate as hers, could not be contemplated even by the most indifferent stranger, without a deep sympathy; much more must the shock have come home to the feelings of one so intimately connected with her.

How pathetically does he in a dirge, not unworthy of Shakspeare, give vent to his agonised heart:

> "That time is dead for ever, child!
> *Drowned*, frozen, dead for ever;—
> We look on the past,
> And stare aghast,
> At the spectres wailing pale and ghast
> Of hopes that thou and I beguiled
> To death on Life's dark river."

On the occasion of his wife's tragic end, Shelley went to Bath, where his children were, in order to bring them home, and place them under the tutelage and tuition of a lady whom he had chosen for that purpose, and who was every way qualified for the office; but Mr. Westbrook refused to give them up, and instituted against Shelley, a suit in Chancery, to prevent his obtaining possession of them. The bill filed, and the answer to it, would, if they could be procured, be most interesting. I imagine Shelley refers to the document he put in, in a letter to some anonymous friend, who had, he thought, overrated its merit, for he says,—"It was a forced, unimpassioned piece of cramped and cautious argument." But few authors are the best judges of their own compositions, and the high idea which Shelley seems to have entertained of his correspondent's critical judgment, suggests that the arguments were strong, and carried with them conviction.

The petition presented to the court in the name of the infant plaintiffs, states the marriage at Gretna Green, in the year 1811, and that they were the issue of it; that the father had deserted his wife; that thereupon the mother returned to the house of her father with the eldest of the infants, and that the other was soon after born; that they had since that time been maintained by their mother, and her father;

and that the mother had lately died. It was then stated, that the father, *since* his marriage, had written and published a work, in which he blasphemously denied the truth of the Christian religion, and denied the existence of a God, the Creator of the universe; and that, since the death of his wife, he had demanded that the children should be delivered up to him, and that he intended, if he could get hold of their persons, to educate them as he thought proper. It goes on to say, that their maternal grandfather had lately transmitted £2,000, four per cents., into the names of trustees, upon trust for them, on their attaining twenty-one, or marriage with his consent; and in the meantime to apply the dividends to their maintenance and education.

This suit, unlike most of those in chancery, was not long protracted, for on the 17th March, 1817, Lord Eldon gave his judgment in writing, as appears in Reg. lib. xiii., 723. See Jacob's Reports of Cases during the time of Lord Eldon, vol. iii., 7266:—

"I have read all the papers left with me, and all the cases cited. With respect to the question of jurisdiction, it is unnecessary for me to add to what I have already stated, that this court has such jurisdiction, until the House of Lords shall decide any dispositions have been unwarranted by the exercise of it.

"I have carefully looked through the answer of the defendant, to see whether it affects the representation made in the affidavits filed in support of the petition, and in the exhibits referred to, of the principles and conduct of life of the father in this case. I do not perceive that the answer does affect the representation, and no affidavits are filed against the petition. Upon the case as represented in the affidavits, the exhibits, and the answer, I have formed my opinion; conceiving myself, according to the practice of the court, at liberty to form it, in the case of an infant, whether the petition in its allegations and suggestions has or has not accurately presented that case to the court, and having intimated in the course of the hearing before me, that I should so form my judgment.

"There is nothing in evidence before me, sufficient to authorise me in thinking that this gentleman has changed, before he arrived at twenty-five, the principles he avowed at nineteen, and think there is ample evidence in the papers and in conduct that no such change has taken place.

"I shall studiously forbear in this case, because it is unnecessary, to state in judgment, what this court might or might not be authorised to do, in the due exercise of its jurisdiction, upon the ground of the probable effect of a father's principles, of any nature, upon the education of his children, where such principles have not been called into activity, or manifested in such conduct in life, as this court, upon such an occasion as the present, would be bound to attend to.

"I may add, that the case differs also, unless

I misunderstand it, from any case in which such principles having been called into activity, nevertheless in the probable range and extent of their operation, did not put to hazard the happiness and welfare of those whose interests are involved upon such an occasion as the present would be bound to attend to. This is a case, in which the matter appears to me the father's principles cannot be misunderstood; in which his conduct, which I cannot but consider as highly immoral, has been established in proof, and established as the effect of those principles; conduct, nevertheless, which he represents to himself and to others, not as conduct to be considered as immoral, but to be recommended and observed in practice, and as worthy of approbation. I consider this, therefore, as a case in which the father has demonstrated that he must and does deem it to be a matter of duty, which his principles impose on him, to recommend to those whose opinions and habits he may take upon himself to form, that conduct, in some of the most important relations of life, as moral and virtuous, which the law calls upon me to consider as immoral and vicious,—conduct which the law animadverts upon, as inconsistent with the duties of parents in such relations of life, and which it considers as injuriously affecting both the interests of such persons, and those of the community.

" I cannot, therefore, think that I shall be justified in delivering over these children for their education, exclusively, to what is called the care, to which Mr. Shelley wishes it to be entrusted.

" If I am wrong in my judgment which I have formed in this painful case, I shall have the consolation to reflect that my judgment is not final.

" Much has been said upon the fact that these children are of tender years. I have already explained, in the course of the hearing, the grounds upon which I think that circumstance not so material as to require me to pronounce an order.

"I add, that the attention which I have been called upon to give to the consideration, how far the pecuniary interests of the children may be affected, has not been called for in vain. I should deeply regret if any act of mine materially affect their interests. But to such interests I cannot sacrifice what I deem to be interests of greater value and higher importance.

"In the meantime I pronounce the following order.

That order restrained the father and his agents from taking possession of the persons of the infants, or intermeddling with them till further orders; and it was referred to the Master, to enquire what would be a proper place for the maintenance and education of the infants, and also to enquire with whom, and under whose care the infants should remain during their minority, or until further order.

In consequence of this decree of the court, the girl and boy were placed under the guardianship of Miss Westbrook, and Shelley told me in 1820, that either £200 or £300 a year out of his limited income, was made over to them for the education and support of these children; such sum being deducted by his father from his annuity.

The event of this

"trial,
I think they call it,"

acted as a continual canker on the mind of Shelley, and although by authority of the solitary case of Mr. Orby Hunter, the court assumed to itself the control of a father's authority over his children, (and the Shelley proceedings were afterwards made an additional precedent in the case of Mr. Long Wellesley,) more liberal times have come, and it has since been declared by a Lord Chancellor, that such a power shall never again be exercised. The argument of Mr. Long Wellesley, even on the admission of irreligious or immoral conduct on the part of a father, was unanswerable. He contended that it by no means follows—such is the innate love of virtue and morality implanted in us, and a sense of the effects of a dereliction of them on their own happiness and that of others—that the worst of men would not wish to bring up his children irreligiously, much less immorally. But with the exception of Shelley's separation from—called a desertion of, his wife, and the writing and printing—for it was never published—of Queen Mab, no act of immorality was proved against him; and, in confirmation of Byron's opinion, that he was one of the most moral men he ever knew, I can certainly say, that as far as my experience of him goes, and it extended through his whole life, with the exception only of a very few years, both in example and moral precept, in a high sense of honour, and regard to truth, and all the qualities of a refined and perfect gentleman, no one could have been a better guide and instructor of youth.

What defence Shelley put in, we know not; but with reference to Queen Mab, from my knowledge of his character, I should consider that, however he might have modified, and did modify his opinions, he was the last man to have recanted them, either by compulsion, or in order to carry a point. The idea that the world would have given him credit for making that recantation from interested motives, and not from conviction, would alone have been sufficient to deter him from such a step.

The poignancy of his regrets at being torn from his children, and his indignation at the tyranny of that tribunal, which he designates,—

> "darkest crest!
> Of that foul-knotted, many-headed worm,
> Which rends its mother's bosom—Priestly pest!
> Masked resurrection of a buried form,"—

(meaning the Star-chamber,) was shewn by his tremendous curse on the Court of Chancery, and him who with "false tears,"* habitual to him, which Shelley calls, "the millstones braining men," delivered the judgment above quoted.

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* *Pandarus.* But there was such laughing, Queen Hecuba laught till her eyes ran sore.

Cressida. With millstones.

Shakspeare.—Troilus and Cressida.

Shelley, witness this anathema, had a tremendous power of satire, and could wield the weapon at will with a lash of bronze. Our English Juvenal Churchill's, and Byron's satires, were mere gnat-bites compared with the scorpion stings, which, ringed with fire, he inflicted. Did he send these verses to Lord Eldon? No, he never promulgated them, and I believe he would have said, in the words that he puts into the mouth of his Prometheus,—

"It doth repent me, words are quick and vain,—
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain."

But besides its haughty indignation, there breathes through the poem the tenderness of a father's love. And here I must remark, that what particularly afflicted him, was, that his children should have been placed under the guardianship of a person of mean education, and of a low condition of life, totally unequal to the office, and who from his narrow-mindedness would, he was convinced, bring them up with a rooted hatred to their father.

After their removal, he never saw them. They were become dead to him, and he sought for that affection denied him in them, in the offspring which his second wife,—how unlike his first!—bore him. No man was fonder of his children than Shelley; he loved them to idolatry, and clung to them as part and parcel of himself. Sometimes a frightful dream came over him, that these second pledges of affection would also be wrested from him by the same ruthless and merciless *fiat*, and the dread of such an event would have proved an effectual barrier to his ever taking up his abode in his native land. Haunted by such frightful spectres, he wrote the lines which Mrs. Shelley has happily preserved from oblivion, inspired many years after his first misfortune, by hearing that the chancellor had thrown out some hint of that intention.

How truly affecting are these stanzas, especially where, alluding to the loss of his children, he paints the consequence that must ensue from that withdrawal from his care :—

" They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
They have made them unfit for thee ;
They have withered the smile and dried the tear
That should have been sacred to me.
And they will curse my name and thee,
Because we fearless are and free."

And in Rosalind and Helen, he says,—

" What avail
Or prayers or tears that chace denial,
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate ;
What the knit soul, that, pleading and pale,
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late
It painted with its own delight ?—
We *were divided.*"

No one felt more than Lord Byron, the inhuman and unchristian decree of the Court of Chancery ; and speaking of the suit, he says,—" Had I been in England, I would have moved heaven and earth to have reversed such a decision."

Let us turn to more cheering contemplations:

With a view of in some degree renovating his health, which had suffered from intense study, his strict Pythagorean system of diet, that by no means agreed with his constitution, and the immoderate use of laudanum, in which he sought for an opiate to his harassed feelings, and in the hope, by the distraction of new scenes, to dull their irritability, on the 28th of July 1814, Shelley, as appears by the second volume of the Posthumous Works, left London, accompanied by the present Mrs. Shelley, the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, and another lady. With that contempt of danger from an element ever his delight, which characterised him, he embarked with them in an open boat from Dover, and not without exposure to a gale of wind on the passage, succeeded in reaching Calais, and thence proceeded to Paris. There, after remaining a week, they resolved to walk through France. He went to the Marché des Herbes, purchased an ass, and thus pilgrimaging, the gipsy party started for Charenton. There finding the quadruped useless, they sold it, purchased a mule, and continued their peregrinations.

The destitution and ruin which the Cossacks had, locust like, left everywhere behind them in their pestilential march,—the distress of the plundered inhabitants,—their roofless cottages, the rafters black, and the walls dilapidated, made a deep impression on Shelley's mind, and gave a sting to his detestation of war and despotism.

Further pedestrianism being rendered impossible by a sprained ancle, he now bought an open voiture, on four wheels, for five napoleons, and hired a man with a mule, with eight more, to convey them to Neufchatel, which, after many inconveniences *en route*, they reached. A magical effect was produced on the travellers by the first sight of the Alps. They were, says the tourist, "a hundred miles distant, but reach so high in the heavens, that they look like those accumulated clouds of dazzling white, that arrange themselves on the horizon during summer, —their immensity staggers the imagination, and so far surpasses all conception, that it requires an effort of the understanding to believe that they indeed form a part of the earth."

With the improvidence peculiar to Shelley in pecuniary matters, he found that on his arrival at Neufchatel, his money was exhausted, and after obtaining thirty-eight pounds on the discount of a bill for forty pounds, at three months, (pretty good interest,) they journeyed on to Lucerne. On reaching the lake of Uri, they hired a boat. This romantic lake, remarkable for its deep seclusion and sacred solitude, is thus described: "The lake of Lucerne is encompassed on all sides by high mountains, that rise abruptly from the water. Sometimes their base points downwards perpendicularly, and casts a black shadow on the waves,—sometimes they are covered with thick wood, whose dark foliage is interspersed by the brown, bare crags, on which the trees have taken root. In every part where a glade shows itself in the forest, it appears cultivated, and cottages peep from among the woods. The most luxuriant islands, rocky and covered with moss, and bending trees, are sprinkled over the lake. Most of these are decorated by the figure of a saint, in wretched waxwork."

After much search after a habitation, they at length domiciled themselves in two unfurnished rooms, in an ugly big house at Brunen, called the Chateau. These they hired at a guinea a month, had beds moved into them, and the next day took possession. It was a wretched place, with no comfort or convenience. It was with some difficulty that they could get any food prepared. As it was cold and rainy, they ordered a fire. They lighted an immense stove, which occupied a corner of the room, and when heated, they were obliged to throw open the windows, to prevent a kind of suffocation; added to this, there was but one person in Brunen who could speak French, a barbarous sort of German being the language of this part of Switzerland. It was with some difficulty, therefore, that they could get their ordinary wants supplied. Shelley's amusement, meanwhile, was writing.

He commenced a romance on the subject of the Assassins. The fragment will be found in his Prose Works, and evinces much power, being a wonderful improvement on his former attempts of the kind. He drew his inspiration from the scenes that were before his eyes. "Nature undisturbed," he says, "had become an enchantress in these solitudes. She had collected here all that was divine and wonderful from the armoury of her own omnipotence. The very winds breathed health and renovation, and the joyousness of youthful courage. Fountains of chrystalline water played perpetually among the aromatic flowers, and mingled a freshness with their odour. The pine boughs became instruments of exquisite contrivance, among which the ever varying breeze waked music of new and more delightful melody. Such scenes of chaotic confusion and harrowing sublimity, surrounding and shutting in the vale, added to the delights of its secure and voluptuous tranquillity. No spectator could have refused to believe that some spirit of great intelligence and power had hallowed these wilds to a deep and solemn mystery." He adds, that "the immediate effect of such a scene suddenly presented to the contemplation of mortal eyes, is seldom the subject of authentic record."

I have thought that the following passage bears some allusion to himself. "An Assassin, accidentally the inhabitant of a civilized country, would wage unremitting war from principle against the predilections and distastes of the many. He would find himself compelled to adopt means which they would abhor, for the sake of an object which they could not conceive that he should propose to himself. Secure and self-enshrined in the magnificence and preeminence of his conceptions, spotless as the light of heaven, he would be the victim among men, of calumny and persecution. Incapable of distinguishing his motives, they would rank him among the vilest and most atrocious criminals. Great beyond all comparison with them, they would despise him in the presumption of their ignorance. Because his spirit burned with an unquenchable passion for their welfare, they would lead him, like his illustrious master, amidst scoffs and mockings and insults, to the remuneration of an ignominious death."

Such were some of his contemplations,—the prognostics, though not of his future destiny—to that extent—of a moral crucifixion. Speaking of the Fragment, Mrs. Shelley says, " There is great beauty in the sketch as it stands,—it breathes that spirit of domestic peace and general brotherhood, founded on love, which he afterwards developed in the Prometheus Unbound ;" and she might have added, in other of his works.

It had been the intention of the party to cross the St. Gothard, at the foot of which they were, and make an excursion into the north of Italy, but the idea was soon abandoned. They resolved to return to England, from which they were distant eight hundred miles. Was it possible, with twenty-eight pounds? enquires the tourist; —but there was no alternative—the attempt must be made. They departed from Lucerne in the *coche d'eau* for Loffenburg, a town on the Rhine, where the falls of that river prevented the same vessel from proceeding any further. There they engaged a small canoe to convey them to Mumph. "It was long, narrow, and flat-bottomed, consisting mostly of deal boards, unpainted, and nailed together with so little care, that the water constantly poured in at the crevices, and the boat perpetually required emptying. The river was rapid and sped swiftly, breaking as it passed on innumerable rocks just covered with water. It was a sight of some dread to see the frail boat winding among the eddies of the rocks, which it was death to touch, and where the slightest inclination on one side would inevitably have upset it."

After a land-adventure, the breaking down of a *caleche* at Mumph, they with some difficulty reached Basle, and where, taking their passage in another boat, laden with merchandise, they bade adieu to Switzerland.

"We were carried down," says the tourist, "by a dangerously rapid current, and saw on each side, hills covered with vines and trees, craggy cliffs, crowned by desolate towers and wooded islands, whose picturesque ruins peeped from between the foliage, and cast the shadows of their forms on the troubled waters without defacing them."

Having reached Rotterdam, they embarked for England, and encountering another storm on the bar, where they were for some time aground, landed in London, on the 13th August.

I have heard Shelley frequently dilate with rapture on the descent of the Rheuss and the Rhine. The remembrance of both, never faded from his memory, and furnished additional stores to his poetic mind, to be treasured up for after days, and reproduced in forms of surpassing sublimity and loveliness.

Yet though his imagination had been enchanted by the aspect of Nature in all her wonders, his bodily health was rather deteriorated than improved by the fatigues of this painful journey; the first part of it performed on foot beneath the burning suns, and through the arid plains and dusty roads of France; and the latter under exposure to the chill blasts of the snowy Alps, and the cold air of open boats. Money difficulties, the worst of all the evils of this life, had also contributed to blunt in a great degree the charm; for the harass of ways and means lies like a weight of lead on the spirit, and palsies enjoyment. He had spent during the six weeks, sixty pounds, and was obliged even to go on credit at Rotterdam for his passage money, in order to be enabled to set foot on his native shores.

When arrived there, he had to look forward to four months before he could hope to receive a single pound note of his anticipated allowance. His father's heart was steeled in obduracy, and with that hatred between fathers and sons which seems hereditary in the family, Sir Timothy shut his purse and his doors against him.

The estate, as it was supposed, was strictly entailed; consequently his coming into the property depended on his surviving his father. His own life was not insurable, and was in so precarious a state that he had no possibility of raising money on his contingency. He was now destined, therefore, to suffer all the horrors of destitution. He says in the Cenci,—

> "The eldest son of a rich nobleman,
> Is heir to all his incapacities,—
> He has great wants, and scanty powers."

How he contrived to live during almost a year in the metropolis, I know not; but he pathetically describes his situation in Rosalind and Helen:—

> "Thou knowest what a thing is poverty,
> Among the fallen on evil days;
> 'Tis crime, and fear, and infamy,
> And houseless want, in frozen ways
> Wandering, ungarmented, and pain;
> And worse than all, that inward stain,

Foul self-contempt, which drowns in tears
Youth's starlight smiles, and wakes its tears,
First like hot gall, then dry for ever.
And well thou knowest, a *mother* never
Would doom her children to this ill,—
And well he knew the same."

Under the prospect of being forced to support himself by a profession, he applied his talents to medicine, which he often told me he should have preferred to all others, as affording greater opportunities of alleviating the sufferings of humanity. He walked a hospital, and became familiar with death in all its forms,—"a lazar house, it was,"—I have heard him quote the passage—

"wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased—all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture—qualms
Of heart-sick agony—all feverish kinds;"

and where

"Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch."

And here, he told me, he himself expected it would have been his fate to breathe his last. His wants were, indeed, few; he still continued, contrary to the advice of his physician, his vegetable diet; for none but a Pythagorean can tell with what a repugnance he who has once tried the system, reverts to the use of animal food. But few as his wants were, his means were scarcely able to supply them, and he has been often known to give a beggar the bread required for his own support.

He was not at that time acquainted with one, of whom I have often heard him speak with a gratitude and respect so justly due, and who is as much distinguished for the qualities of his heart as his talents;—why should I not name him?—Horace Smith. To his generous sympathy Shelley was throughout the latter part of his life greatly indebted. His purse was ever open to him, and in those pecuniary embarrassments, which his extreme generosity to others often entailed on him, he never applied to his valued friend in vain.

But at the beginning of the yeart 1815, his worldly prospects brightened; the Shelley settlement, which is well known by lawyers, and quoted as a masterpiece of that legal casuistry called an entail, was found to contain an ultimate limitation of the reversion of the estates to the grandfather. A celebrated conveyancer, I believe the friend whom I have already mentioned in a former part of these memoirs, has the credit of having made this important discovery; and the consequence was, the fee simple of the estate, after his father's death, was vested in Shelley.

He was thus enabled to dispose of it by will as he pleased; and not only this, he had the means of raising money to supply his necessities. Sir Timothy was well aware of his son's position, but was not prepared for the discovery of it. The news fell upon him like a thunderbolt, he was furious; but being desirous of benefitting his family, by the advice of a solicitor, made some arrangement; but whether on a *post obit*, or what terms, I know not, with Shelley, for an annuity of eight hundred pounds a-year. Doubtless he took care to have good security for the same.

In the summer of this year, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire, and a visit to Clifton, Shelley rented a house on Bishopsgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness; accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making a voyage from Windsor to Crickdale; on which occasion his Stanzas in the churchyard of Lichdale were written, that breathe a solemn harmony in unison with his own feelings; and conclude with the following aspiration,—

"Here could I hope, like an enquiring child,
Sporting on graves, that Death did hide from human
sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep,
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep."

On his return from this excursion, Alastor was composed. He spent, while writing it, his days in the Great Park. It is a reflex of all the wild, and wonderful, and lovely scenes drawn with a master hand, which he had witnessed. The savage crags of Caernarvonshire—the Alps, and glaciers, and ravines, and falls, and torrent-like streams of Switzerland—the majesty of the lordly Rhine, and impetuous Rheuss—the Thames winding beneath banks of mossy slope, and meadows enamelled with flowers; and in its tranquil wanderings,

> " Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
> That overhang its quietness."

But above all, the magnificent woodland of Windsor Forest, where

> " the oak,
> Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
> Embraces the light beech ;"

where

> " the pyramids
> Of the tall cedar, overarching, frame
> Most solemn domes within ; and far below,
> Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,

> The ash and the acacia floating hang,
> Tremulous and pale,—"

were the sources from which he drew his inspiration.

It has been said of a great German author, I believe Herder, that he had but one thought, and that was the Universe. May it not be observed of Shelley, that he had but one thought, and that was Love—Love in its most comprehensive sense,—Love, the sole law that should govern the moral world, as it does the universe. Love was his very essence. He worshipped Love. He saw personified in all things animate and inanimate, the love that was his being and his bane. He, under the idealism of the spirit of Solitude, in Alastor, paints his longing after the discovery of his antetype, the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating the deductions of his own; an imagination which could enter upon, and seize the subtle and delicate peculiarities which he had delighted to cherish and unfold in secret; with a frame, whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, should vibrate with the vibration of his own, and a combination of all these in such proportion as the type within demands. He thirsted after his likeness—and he found it not,—no bosom that could dive into the fountains of his soul's deep stores, hold intercourse or communion with his soul; the language of all in whom he had expected to meet with these qualities, seemed as of a distant and a savage land,—unintelligible sounds, that could make no music to his ear, could awaken no chord of music in his thoughts; when he spoke, words of mute and motionless ice replied to words quivering and burning with the heart's best food. It was with this feeling of despair and disappointment, that he sought in Nature what it had been a vain and fruitless hope to discover among his kind. Yet in Nature, in the solitude of Nature,—in the trees, the flowers, the grass, the waters and the sky, in every motion of the green leaves of spring, there was heard, inaudible to others, a voice that gave back the echo of his own; insensible to others, there was felt a secret correspondence with his self. There was an eloquence in the tongueless wind,

> "And in the breezes, whether low or loud,
> And in the forms of every passing cloud,"—

in the blue depth of noon, and in the starry night, that bore a mysterious relation to something within him, awakened his spirits to a dance of breathless rapture, and filled his eyes with tears of tenderness. But a time came when the

> "Mother of this unfathomable world,"

as he calls Nature, no longer sufficed to satiate the cravings of her favourite son.

> "A spirit seemed
> To stand beside him, clothed in no bright robes
> Of shadowy silver, or enshrining light,
> Borrowed from aught the visible world affords,
> But undulating woods, and silent well,
> Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
> Hold commune with him, as if he and it
> Were all that was,—only, when his regard

Was raised by intense pensiveness, two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him."

In a poem entitled Ahasuerus, I endeavoured, in the character of Julian, adopting often his own language and sentiments, to shadow out this yearning of Shelley's after the ideal; and a few of the lines yet recur to my memory. It is to be hoped the reader will pardon their insertion here.

"And momently, by day and night,
  The vision of that heavenly maid
  Stood ever by his side, arrayed
In forms and hues most fair and bright—
The embodied soul of all that's best
In Nature, fairest, loveliest,—
A thing of woods and hills and streams,
Of plants, and flowers, and rainbow beams,
  'A radiant sister of the day:'
He saw her when the daylight breaks
  From out the sea's marmoreal bosom;
He saw her when the sunset streaks
  With lines of gold, leaf, bud, and blossom;
He saw her in the clouds of even;
He saw her smile in that of Heaven.

The lightest breeze, on gentle wing,
Amid the leaves it scarcely stirs,
Most musically whispering,
Recalled that eloquent voice of hers ;
In that divinest solitude,
He heard it in the murmuring wood ;
And in the rippling of the flood."

And thereto might be added his own exquisite lines :—

" There seemed, from the remotest seat
Of the wide ocean's waste,
To the soft flower beneath his feet,
A magic circle traced,
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling, silent life :
To momentary peace it bound
His mortal spirit's strife ;
And still he felt the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere."

A review* which has, with a liberality that is unique at the present day, ever stood forward to do justice to the merits of contemporary authors, —disregarding, in so doing, their politics,—says of Alastor:—"The imagery of the poem is chequered with lights and shades, which to the uninitiated seem capriciously painted in a studio, without regard to the real nature of things; for there is not apparent 'a system of divine philosophy, like a sun reflecting order on his landscape.' If I might be allowed to illustrate this clever remark, I should add,—resembling one of Salvator Rosa's, which near to the eye appears a confused chaos of rocks and trees and water, the most singularly and indiscriminately massed and mingled, but which viewed from a proper point of view, forms an harmonious whole in entire keeping with art and with nature. "This poem," continues the critic, "contains infinite sadness. It is the morbid expression of 'a soul desperate,' to use the beautiful words of Jeremy Taylor, 'by à quick sense of constant infelicity.' As one who has returned from the valley of the dolorous abyss, the reader hears the voice of lamentation wailing for the world's wrong, in accents wild and sweet, but incommunicably strange. It is the outpouring of his own emotions embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the anticipation of a near and approaching death."

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* Frazer's Magazine.

Early in the spring of 1816, in company with the two ladies who had been sharers in the joys and sorrows of his former wanderings on the continent, he again took leave of the white cliffs of Albion, and passing through Paris, where he made no stay, followed the same line of country they had traversed nearly two years before, as far as Troyes. There they left the route leading to Neufchatel, and by that which led through Dijon and Dole, arrived at Poligny, and after resting at Champagnolles, a little village situate in the depth of the mountains, entered Switzerland for the second time, by the pass of *Les Rousses*. Such was the state of the road then, that it required the aid of ten men to support the carriage in its descent.

Who that has traversed one of the most uninteresting tracts in Southern Europe, if we take its extent, *La belle France* as it has been *complimentarily* styled, from Paris to the Jura, knows not the delight with which the traveller looks upon the glorious landscape that lies below him, diversified as it is by the crescent of Lake Leman, its viney shores and cheerful towns, and framed in by the gigantic outline of the Alps, surmounted by the domes and pinnacles of their eternal snows? We may imagine, then, the transport with which Shelley hailed the approach of Geneva. The party took up their quarters at Dejean's, Secheron, then the best hotel, though since eclipsed by the Bourg and so many others in that key to Italy, and yet in position equalled by none, for it lies immediately under the eye of Mont Blanc. "From the meadows," says Shelley, "we see the lovely lake blue as the heavens which it reflects, and sparkling with golden beams. The opposite shore is sloping and covered with vines. Gentlemen's seats are scattered over these banks, behind which rise ridges of black mountains, and towering far above in the midst of the snowy Alps, the highest and queen of all. Such is the view reflected by the Lake. It is a bright summer scene, without any of that sacred solitude and deep seclusion that delighted us at Lucerne."

Lord Byron, attended by his young physician Polidori, was already arrived. The two poets had never met, but were not altogether strangers, for Shelley had sent the author of Childe Harold a copy of Queen Mab in 1812, soon after its publication; who showed it, he says, "to Mr. Southeby, as a work of great power;" but the letter accompanying it, strangely enough miscarried.

Shelley, soon after his arrival, wrote a note to the noble lord, detailing at some length the accusations which had been laid against his character, and adding, that if Lord Byron thought those charges were not true, it would make him happy to have the honour of paying him a visit. The answer was such as might be anticipated. There was, in their present meeting at Geneva, no want of disposition towards a friendly acquaintance on both sides."

After a fortnight's residence at Dejean's, Shelley and his female friends removed to the Campagne Mont Allegre, on the opposite side of the lake; and shortly after, Lord Byron took that of Diodati. This villa had probably been chosen from its association, for the Diodati from whom it derived its name, was a friend of Milton; and the author of Paradise Lost had himself, in his way to and from Italy, hallowed it by his abode. The Campagne Mont Allegre, or Chapuis, as it was sometimes called, lay immediately at the foot of Diodati, being only separated from it by a vineyard, and having no other communication but a very tortuous, hedged in, and narrow lane, scarcely admitting of a *char-a-banc.* The spot was one of the most sequestered on the lake, and almost hidden by a grove of umbrageous forest trees, as is a bird's nest among leaves, and invisible from the main road. At the extremity of the terrace, is a secure little port, belonging to the larger villa, and here was moored the boat which formed so much the mutual delight and recreation of the two poets. It was keeled and clinker-built, the only one of the kind on the lake ; and which, although Mr. Moore says it "was fitted to stand the usual squalls of the climate," was to my mind ill-adapted for the navigation, for it drew too much water and was narrow and crank. I saw it two years after, lying a wreck, and half submerged, though (like Voltaire's pen, of which hundreds have been sold as original to Englishmen at Ferney) there was at that time a chaloupe at Geneva that went by the name of Byron's. The real boat was the joint property of the two poets, and in this frail vessel, Shelley used to brave at all hours, *Bises* which none of the *barques* could face. These north-easters are terrific ; they follow the course of the lake, and increasing in violence as they drive along in blackening gusts, spread themselves at last on the devoted town to which they are real pestilences. Maurice, their Batellier, although a Westminster reviewer denies that they had one, speaking of Shelley, said that "he was in the habit of lying down at the bottom of the vessel, and gazing at Heaven, where he would never enter." I should not have given credit to a Genevese for so much poetry. Byron, Moore says, would often lean abstracted over the side, and surrender himself up in silence to the absorbing task of moulding his thronging thoughts into shape."

Of these water excursions, Shelley used often to speak. To watch the sunset—to see it long after it sunk beneath the horizon of the Jura, glowing in roses on the palaces of snow—to gaze on their portraiture in the blue mirror, till they assumed the paleness of death, and left a melancholy like we feel in parting, though with a certainty of meeting again, with some object of our idolatry—these were some of his delights. The thunder-storms too, that visited them, were grand and terrific in the extreme. "We watch them," says Mrs. Shelley, "as they approach from the opposite side of the lake, observing the lightning play among the clouds in various parts of the heavens, and dart in jagged fissures upon the piney heights of Jura, dark with the shadow of the overhanging cloud, whilst perhaps the sun is shining cheerily on us." "One night," Shelley adds, "we enjoyed a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up; the pines in Jura made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful gusts over our heads amid the darkness."

It was this very tempest, in all probability, that inspired Lord Byron with the magnificent description so well known in the third canto of Childe Harold.

The poets were not always singly, or but companioned by each other, in the boat. Their water excursions were enlivened by the presence of the ladies, and Polidori sometimes made one of the party.

The similarity of the destinies of Shelley and Byron, contributed to cement this their friendship. Both were parted from their children. Both were marks for the world's obloquy; one was self-exiled for ever, the other soon about to be so. Their pursuits were congenial, they had

"Been cradled into poetry by wrong,
And learnt by suffering what they taught in song."

They both sought and found in solitude and nature a balm for their wounded spirits. No wonder, then, that in this absolute retirement, they were so seldom apart. They spent their mornings on the lake, their evenings in their own intellectual circle; and thus, as Byron said, he passed that summer more rationally than at any period of his life. That he profited by the superior reading and refined taste of Shelley, is evident from all he wrote in Switzerland. He had before written for fame—he here was inspired by a nobler sentiment. There is a higher strain of inspiration—a depth of thought and feeling—"a natural piety," in the third canto of Childe Harold, which we do not find in any of his previous works, and which may be accounted for partly, also, by his being *drenched* with Wordsworth, now become one of Shelley's chief favourites; and whom he addresses in a Sonnet as "Poet of Nature." This peaceful quietude—this haven after the storm—this retreat, was more than once disturbed by the physician. He was, Mr. Moore, says, "the son of the secretary to Alfieri," better known as the author of the Italian Grammar in England, where he taught his own language. Dr. Polidori not only conducted himself to his patron in a way that it required all his forbearance to brook, by his ill-timed and sarcastic remarks, but his intemperance shewed itself in a still more overbearing manner to Shelley, which was continually breaking out; and on one occasion, deeming, wrongfully, that Shelley had treated him with contempt, he went so far as to proffer him a sort of challenge, at which Shelley, as might be expected, only laughed. Lord Byron, however, perceiving that the vivacious physician might take further advantage of his friend's known sentiments against duelling, said—"Recollect that though Shelley has scruples about duelling, I have none, and shall be at all times ready to take his place."

But if Polidori was jealous of the daily increasing intimacy between the two poets, he was not less envious of their having assigned to them by the world, superior talents to his own; and which judgment, he endeavoured to prove was unjust, by perpetrating a tragedy. Mr. Moore gives a humorous account of the reading of the production, (of which I have heard Shelley speak,) at Diodati; which Byron, for he was the reader, constantly interlarded with,—"I assure you, when I was on the Drury Lane Committee, much worse things were offered to me;" and yet in a letter to Murray, he afterwards recommends him to publish this tragedy, with the remark, "*I have never read it.*" So much for his memory! In opening theLife of Lord Byron, everywhere similar instances of its treacherousness, or his love of mystification, may be traced; to which I shall not now refer, but return to the would-be dramatist; and as Mr. Moore, so practised a biographer, has given on many occasions, the histories of those with whom the noble poet had intercourse, I shall here dispose of the doctor.

Dr. Polidori was a tall, handsome man, with a marked Italian cast of countenance, which bore the impress of profound melancholy,—a good address and manners, more retiring than forward in general society. He had, after quitting Lord Byron, come to settle at Norwich, in the neighbourhood of which, resided several old Catholic families of distinction, from whom he expected encouragement in his profession; but although he was well received in their houses, he was disappointed in getting practice, and scarcely obtained a fee. Who would have liked to trust their lives in the hands of an M.D. of twenty-two years of age? Perhaps, also, his being a foreigner, and having been a friend of Byron, were no great recommendations in a country town, where bigotry and prejudice (though the Diocesan was free from both, and *par parenthese*, occasionally received him at his hospitable table,) are nowhere more prevalent,—so that he confirmed Byron's prognostic:

> "I fear the Doctor's skill at Norwich,
> Will never warm the Doctor's porridge."

The disavowal by the noble poet, (with the remark that he would be responsible for no man's dulness but his own,) of the Vampire, which in order to obtain a sale for it, Polidori had given out as his late patron's, placed him in a false position, and disgusted him with himself; or rather, as his friends said, with the world; and in a fit of misanthropy, he published a pamphlet not devoid of talent, entitled, "An Essay on Positive Pleasure." In this treatise he took a gloomy view of life, and endeavoured to prove, *a la Rochefaucauld,* that friendship and love were mere names, and totally unable to supply the void in the human heart.

The ladies were especially offended at the tenor of the work, which was anything but complimentary to the sex. Soon after its appearance, might be read, and were very extensively read in a Norwich paper, the following lines, written by the son of no mean poet—nor are they deficient in point—under the signature, though the initials are inaccurately transposed, of "S.W."

"When gifted Harold left his ruined home,
With mourning lyre through foreign realms to roam;
When he, the giant genius, stalked abroad,
Blasting the flowers that blossomed on his road;
Confessed no joy in hope—no light in life,
But all was darkness, vanity, and strife:
Yet would his better feeling sometimes move
That icy bosom with one touch of love:
None could, like him, with glowing verse essay

To fix the spark of Beauty's heavenly ray;
None could, like him, so warmly—deeply feel,
How female softness moulds a heart of steel.
But thou—weak follower of a soulless school!
Whose stoic feelings vacillate by rule,
Doomed through a joyless wilderness to rove,
Uncheered by friendship, and unwarmed by love.
Dull, satiate spirit! ere thy prime's begun,
Accurst with hating what thou canst not shun;
Man shall despise thee for thy mean attempt,
And woman spurn thee with deserved contempt;
Thy pride and apathy, thy folly see,
And what we hate in Harold—loathe in thee."

Then followed an intemperate reply by Polidori to this severe, though not altogether unmerited satire, for he was the very ape of Byron, addressed to the author, with false supposition of the authorship, which in the next Journal was contradicted by the aspersed individual. This caused a long letter from some friend of Polidori's, ending with, "Doff your lion's skin, &c." This last effusion occasioned an answer from the young poet, in which he expresses a doubt which most to admire, the *aptness* of the quotation, the *shrewdness* of the conjecture, the eloquence of the rhetoric, or the amiable forbearance of the writer. W. S., however, preserved his incognito, and being a stranger on a short visit to Norwich—a young man about to enter into orders—the mystery was strictly kept.

Whether this satire was calculated, or not, to injure Polidori's prospects, is a question; but that it led to the well-known result, which ended his career, is not probable. He made an attempt to destroy himself at Diodati, and as Lord Byron said, was always compounding poisons with a view of having at hand the most subtile and speedy means of extinguishing life. Suicide seems with him to have been an *idée fixe.* It is also *said*, that, like most Italians, he was very susceptible of the tender passion; that he had fallen desperately and hopelessly in love. The object of his passion was the beautiful and accomplished daughter of a catholic gentleman of rank, and there was some romance in the story, for which, however, I will not vouch. Polidori upset his gig at the entrance of the Park, and broke his leg, and being unable to be removed further than the house, remained there during his illness. This attachment was a preposterous one, and could but lead to disappointment; but that it preyed upon his mind, and brought about the fatal catastrophe, I cannot credit. He had an ill-regulated mind, which if properly directed, might have rendered him a useful member of his profession, and society. Such was at least the opinion of Lord Byron. Shelley, I have heard often speak of Polidori, but without any feeling of ill-will.

A friend of mine, who occasionally made a morning call at Diodati, says that he met one day there a youth apparently not seventeen,—such was his boyish exterior,—but in whose conversation there was nothing of the boy. He was surprised as he compared his words and looks together, at the contrast,—astonished at the subtilty of his remarks, the depth of his information, and the deference Lord Byron seemed to pay to him. It was Shelley. This juvenile appearance he never lost.

During his stay at Poligny, he formed no acquaintance with the Genevans. He had not had sufficient opportunities of rightly estimating their character, when he says, that "there is more equality of classes than in England." Nowhere did at that time castes prevail to such an extent. No talent, no wealth, no merit could break down the barrier of birth—yes! strange enough, as in the republic of the Nairs, a female could ennoble. If she made a *mesalliance*, she could elevate her husband into sufferance, but if a patrician married a plebeian, he was for ever excluded from society, a *murus aheneus* was raised against him, that nothing could break down. The *rue basse* and the *Treile* might as well attempt to form a junction. Lord Byron knew the Genevese better than Shelley: he knew they courted him, not because he was a poet, but because he was a lord. Nobility being the golden calf at which, like most republicans, they fall down and worship.

Among the most interesting of Shelley's prose remains, is the account given of the *tour du lac*, which he made in company with Byron. The *Nouvelle Heloise*, which he styles, "an overflowing of sublimest genius, and more than mortal sensibility," was his *Manuel de Voyage*. The scene so graphically painted by Rousseau, Clarens, the Rochet de Julie, and especially Meillerie, awakened in him all his poetical enthusiasm, and were to him haunted ground, an enchanted land. The Savoy side of the lake, which they coasted, and where they landed, particularly pleased him; and lovely it indeed is!" Groves of pine, chesnuts, and walnuts, overshadow its magnificent and unbounded forests, to which England has no parallel—for in the midst of the woods, are indeed dells of lawney expanse, immeasurably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers and odorous with thyme." During this excursion, which at least is not unattended with danger in such a craft as they possessed—totally unfitted, from its drawing too much water, and other causes, for the purpose—they were nearly lost. "The wind increased in violence," he says, "till it blew tremendously, and as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves of frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. One of our boatmen, who was a dreadfully stupid fellow, persisted in holding the sail, when the boat was in danger of being driven under water by the hurricane. On discovering his error he let it entirely go, and the boat for a moment refused to obey the helm; in addition, the rudder was so broken as to render the management of it very difficult. One wave fell in, and then another."

Shelley never showed more nobleness of character, disinterestedness, and presence of mind, than on this trying occasion.

Byron, in one of his letters, says, "We were in the boat,—imagine five in such a boat. The sail was mismanaged—the boat filling fast. He

(Shelley) can't swim.—I slipped off my coat, made him slip off his, and take hold of an oar, telling him I thought, being an expert swimmer, I could save him, if he would not struggle when he kept hold of me; unless we got smashed against the rocks, which were high, and sharp, with an arched roof on them at that minute. We were then about a hundred yards from shore, and the boat in great peril. He answered me with great coolness, that he had no notion of being saved, and that I should have enough to do to save myself."

Shelley, in speaking of this scene, says: "I felt in this near prospect of death, a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful, had I been alone, but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to save mine."

This scene occurred off the rocks of Meillerie, and Byron remarked,—"It would have been very classical to have gone to the bottom there, but not very agreeable."

On visiting Clarens, Shelley, thinking of the loves of St. Prieux and Julie, says,—"Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me, at this moment, to repress the tears of melancholy transport, which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects that excited them?" At Lausanne, whilst walking on the acacia-shaded terrace of Gibbon's house, and which the historian of the "Rise and Fall" had so often paced, he observes: "Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now, that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne, and the Roman Empire, compel me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon."

On their return from this store of memories for after days, Lord Byron was visited by Monk

Lewis, that strange and eccentric genius, who met with so unsentimental a death—exhaustion by sea-sickness. Lewis's love of the wild and marvellous, which he had imbibed from the legends of Germany, where he had travelled in early life, communicated itself in some degree to his companions, and they were in the habit of passing their evenings in narrating ghost stories, in which, as it may be supposed, Lewis distinguished himself the most; and told, among many others, that of Minna, which first appeared in "The Conversations of Lord Byron;" and one also sketched there, which is more stirring, of a haunted house, at Mannheim, which he had inhabited, that had belonged to a widow, who to prevent the marriage of her only son with a poor but honest maiden, had sent him to sea, where he perished in a wreck. Remorse and sorrow for her irreparable loss, and the reproaches of the girl, crazed the mother's brain, and whose occupation became turning over the pages of newspapers, in order to find tidings of him. At last she died of a broken heart, and continued her employment after her death, which accounted for Lewis's hearing every night at a certain hour, as he lay in bed, the rustling and crackling of paper. What an admirable subject for a ballad! The anecdote was communicated to me from a memorandum taken down after an evening at Diodati.

Shelley's imagination, excited by this, and other tales, told with all the seriousness that marked a conviction of belief—though it seems from Mr. Moore, that the author of the Monk placed no faith in the magic wonders he related,—one evening produced a singular scene. Shelley had commenced a story, and in the midst of it, worked up to an extraordinarily painful pitch, was compelled to break the thread of his narration, by a hasty retreat. Some of the party followed him, and found him in a trance of horror, and when called upon after it was overpast, to explain the cause, he said that he had had a vision of a beautiful woman, who was leaning over the balustrade of a staircase, and looking down on him with four eyes, two of which were in the centre of her uncovered breasts.

It appears from Mr. Moore, that the Vampire, the fragment of which was afterwards published among Byron's works, had been sketched previously to Monk Lewis's arrival, and that the same *soiree* gave rise to Frankenstein.

The creation of a man-monster is to be found in Paracelsus,* though by a very different process, without doubt, from that which suggested itself to the mind of Mrs. Shelley. This wild and wonderful romance, which has furnished a subject for the stage, not only in England, but in France, has been quoted in parliament, and

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* *Paracelsus de Natura Rerum*, lib. 1, *De Generatione Rerum Naturalium.* §. *Homunculi Generatio Artificialis.* Opp. ed. Genev. (1658,) vol. ii. p. 86 b. "Sed nec generationis Homunculorum ullo modo obliviscendum est. Est enim hujus rei aliqua veritas, quanquam diu in magno occultatione et secretò hoc habitum sit, et non parva dubitatio est quæstio inter aliquos ex antiquis Philosophis fuerit, an naturæ et arti possibile esset, hominem gigni extra corpus muliebre et matricem naturalem. Ad hoc respondeo, quòd id arti Spagyricæ et naturæ nullo modo repugnet, imò benè possibile sit. Ut autem id fiat, hoc modo procedendum est: Sperma viri per se in cucurbita sigillata putrefiat summa putrefactione ventris equini per quadraginta dies, aut tandiu donec incipiat vivere et moveri ac agitari, quod făcilè videri potest. Post hoc tempus aliquo modo homini simile erit, at tamen pellucidum et sine corpore. Si jam posthâc quotidie Arcano sanguinis humani cautè et prudenter nutriatur et pascatur, et per quad-

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raginta septimanas in perpetuo et æquabili calore ventris equini conservetur, fit inde verus et vivus infans, habens omnia membra infantis, qui ex muliere natus est, sed longè minor. Hunc nos Homunculum vocamus et is postea eo modo diligentia et studio educandus est, donec adolescat et sapere et intelligere incipiat. Hoc jam est unum ex maximis secretis, quæ Deus mortali et peccatis obnoxio homini patefecit. Est enim miraculum et magnale Dei, et arcanum super omnia arcana, et meritò in secretis servari debet usque ad extrema tempora, quando nihil erit reconditi, sed omnia manifestabuntur, etc. Et quanquam hoc hactenus, hominibus notum non fuerit, fuit tamen Sylvestribus et Nymphis et Gigantibus ante multa tempora cognitum, quia inde etiam orti sunt. Quoniam ex talibus Homunculis cum ad ætatem virilem perveniunt, fiunt gigantes, pygmæi, et alii homines magni miraculosi, qui instrumenta sunt magnarum rerum, qui magnas victorias, contra suos hostes obtinent et omnia secreta et abscondita noverunt: quoniam arte acquirunt suam vitam: arte acquirunt corpus, carnem, ossa et sanguinem: arte nascuntur, quare etiam ars ipsis incorporatur et connascitur, et à nullo opus est ipsis discere, sed alii coguntur ab ipsis discere, quoniam ab arte orti sunt et existunt, ut rosa aut flos in horto, et vocantur Sylvestrium et Nympharum liberi, ob id quod ut et virtute sua non hominibus, sed spiritibus similes sint, &c."

whose hero has become a byeword, was one of those conceptions that take hold of the public mind at once and for ever. It was an astonishing effort of genius in a person of her age,—for she was scarcely eighteen,—not nineteen, as Byron said. I have heard it asserted that the idea was Shelley's, and that he assisted much in the development of the plot; but there is no good ground for this supposition. The best proof of the contrary, is his review of the novel, which no one who knew him would accuse him of having written, had he had any share in the authorship; and as that admirable piece of criticism is not included, from modesty, doubtless, on the part of Mrs. Shelley, among his Prose Works, I shall give the greater part of it a place here.

" The novel of Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus, is undoubtedly, as a mere story, one of the most complete and original productions of the day. We debate with ourselves in wonder, as we read it, what could have been the series of thoughts, what could have been the peculiar experiences that awakened them,—which conduced in the author's mind, to the astonishing combinations of motives and incidents, and the startling catastrophe, which compose this tale. There are, perhaps, some points of subordinate importance, which prove that it is the author's first attempt. But in the judgment, which requires a very nice discrimination, we may be mistaken; for it is conducted throughout with a firm and steady hand. The interest gradually accumulates, and advances towards the conclusion, with the accelerated rapidity of a rock rolled down a mountain. We are led breathless with suspense and sympathy, and the heaping up of incident on incident, and the working of passion out of passion. We cry 'hold—hold, enough!' but yet there is something to come; and like the victim, whose history it relates, we think we can bear no more, and yet more is to be borne. Pelion is heaped on Ossa, and Ossa on Olympus.

We climb Alp upon Alp, until the horizon is seen, blank, vacant, and limitless; and the head turns giddy, and the ground seems to fail under our feet.

"This novel rests its claim on being a source of powerful and profound emotion. The elementary feelings of the human mind are exposed to view, and those who are accustomed to reason deeply on their origin and tendency, will perhaps be the only persons who can sympathise, to the full extent, in the interest of the actions which are their result. But founded on nature as they are, there is perhaps no reader who can endure any thing besides a mere love story, who will not feel a responsive string touched in his inmost soul. The sentiments are so affectionate and innocent, the characters of the subordinate agents in this strange drama are clothed in the light of such a mild and gentle mind. The pictures of domestic manners are of the most simple and attaching character; the father's is irresistible and deep. Nor are the crimes and malevolence of the simple Being, though indeed withering and tremendous, the offspring of any unaccountable propensity to evil, but flow irresistibily from certain causes fully adequate to their production. They are all children as it were of Necessity and Human Nature. In this the direct moral of the book consists, and it is perhaps the most important and the most universal application of any moral that can be enforced by example. Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked. Requite affection with scorn; let one being be selected, for whatsoever cause, as the refuse of his kind,—divide him, a social being, from society, and you impose upon him the irresistible obligations, malevolence and selfishness. It is thus that too often in society, those who are best qualified to be its benefactors and its ornaments, are branded by some accident with scorn, and changed by neglect and solitude of heart into a scourge and a curse.

"The Being in Frankenstein is no doubt a tremendous creature. It was impossible that he should not have received among men that treatment which led to the consequences of his being a social nature. He was an abortion and an anomaly, and though his mind was such as its first impressions framed it, affectionate and full of moral sensibility, yet the circumstances of his existence are so monstrous and uncommon, that, when the consequences of them became developed in action, his original goodness was gradually turned into misanthropy and revenge. The scene between the Being and the blind De Lacey in the cottage, is one of the most profound and extraordinary instances of passion that we ever recollect. It is impossible to read this dialogue, and indeed many others of a somewhat similar nature, without feeling the heart suspend its pulsations with wonder, and the 'tears stream down the cheeks.' The rencounter and arguments between Frankenstein and the Being on the sea of ice,* almost approaches, in effect, to the expostulations of Caleb Williams with Falkland. It reminds us, indeed, somewhat of the style and character of that admirable writer, to whom the author has dedicated *his* work, and whose productions he seems to have studied.

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* Chamisso owes much in his Peter Schlemihl to this novel, especially in this part of the catastrophe.

"There is only one instance, however, in which we detect the least approach to imitation, and that is, the conduct of the incident of Frankenstein's landing in Ireland. The general character of the tale indeed resembles nothing that ever preceded it. After the death of Elizabeth, the story, like a stream which grows at once more rapid and profound as it proceeds, assumes an irresistible solemnity, and the magnificent energy and swiftness of a tempest.

"The churchyard scene, in which Franken stein visits the tombs of his family; his quitting Geneva, and his journey through Tartary, to the shores of the Frozen Ocean, resemble at once the terrible reanimation of a corpse, and the supernatural career of a spirit. The scene in the cabin of Walton's ship—the more than mortal enthusiasm and grandeur of the Being's speech over the dead body of his victim, is an exhibition of intellectual and imaginative power, which we think the reader will acknowledge has never been surpassed."

I mistook Byron's words, when he said, he made a tour of the lake with Shelley and Hobhouse. He must have alluded to his voyage on two different occasions. That with Mr. Hobhouse occurred at a later period. I might have known, had I reflected on the circumstance, that it could not have taken place in company with Shelley; for Hobhouse, of whom more hereafter, was one of Shelley's most inveterate enemies, and never ceased to poison Lord Byron's mind against him, being jealous of the growing intimacy of the two poets, and thinking with Gay, that

> "friendship is but a name,
> Unless to one you stint the flame,"

—Number One being with him all in all.

With Shelley, Byron disagreed in many essential points, but they never came to a difference, which was the case with few of his pseudo friends. Mr. Hobhouse and himself were always best apart, and it was a relief to him when they finally parted, not on the best terms, in Greece. A cold, uncongenial, mathematical man, like Hobhouse, could have little in common with Byron. But Shelley was an *Eldorado*, an inexhaustible mine. Byron (as in the case of Charles Skinner Matthews, of whom he used to talk so much, and regretted too so deeply) not being, though he pretends to have been a great reader, a great thinker, liked the company of those who were, for thus he obtained both the matter and spirit through the alembic of others' brains. His admiration of Shelley's talents and acquirements only yielded to an esteem for his character and virtues; and to have past a day without seeing him, would have seemed a lost day. No wonder, then, that in this absolute retirement, they were inseparable.

Shelley used to say, that reading Dante produced in him despair. Might not also the third Canto of Childe Harold, and Manfred, have engendered a similar feeling? Certain it is, that he wrote little at Geneva. He read incessantly. His great studies at this time were the Greek dramatists, especially Æschylus's Prometheus, whom he considered the type of Milton's Satan. He read this greatest of tragedies to Byron, a very indifferent Greek scholar, which produced his sublime ode on Prometheus, and occasionally rendered for him passages out of Faust, which it appears Monk Lewis afterwards entirely translated to him, and from which Göthe assumes Manfred to be taken; but in the treatment of the subject I can find no trace of plagiarism. Byron, with more reason and justice, retorted on Göthe such a charge; and he might have added, that Margaret's madness, as I have heard Shelley observe, bore a strong resemblance to Ophelia's; and that the song, "*Mein*

*Mutter,**" &c., is a bad version of *Mactuadel Borne,* "the Holly-tree," which runs thus:

> "Mein Moder de mi schlacht,
> Mein fater de mi att,
> Mein Swister, de Madkoniken,
> Söcht alle meine Beeniken."

At the end of July, Shelley and his companions made an excursion to Chamouni. At sight of the Mont Blanc, as they approached it from Savoy, he exclaims:—"I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of their aerial summits excited, when they first burst upon me, a sentiment of ecstatic wonder, not unallied with madness; and remember," he adds, in the letter to his friend, "this was one scene, though it passed home to our regard and our imagination. Though it embraced a vast extent of space, the snowy pyramids which shot into the blue sky, seemed to overhang our path; the ravine clothed with giant pines, and black with its depths below, so deep, that the very roaring of the untameable Arve, which rolled through it, could not be heard above. All was as much our own, as if we had been creators of such impressions in the minds of others, as now occupied our own. Nature was the poet, whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest."

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* Since translated by Mr. Hayward,—translated? travestied, I should say,—thus:

> My mother, the whore, she was the death of me;
> My father, the rogue, he ate me up;
> My little sister picked up the bones at a cool place;
> There I became a beautiful wood-bird.
> Fly away! fly away!

Of the *Mer de Glace*, he says,—"I will not pursue Buffon's grand, but gloomy theory, that this globe that we inhabit, will at some future period be changed into a mass of frost, by the encroachments of the polar ice, and of that produced on the most elevated parts of the earth. Imagine to yourself, Ahriman seated among the desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in their terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity; and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, torrents, rocks, and glaciers; at once proofs and symbols of his reign; add to this, the degradation of the human species, who in these regions are half deformed and idiotic; and most of whom are deprived of any thing that can excite interest or admiration. This is a part of the subject more mournful than sublime; but such as neither the painter nor the philosopher should disdain to regard."

Before, however, leaving Chamouni, after visiting the source of the Aveiron, the stream of poetry was unlocked from his breast, and he composed his address to Mont Blanc, written under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects it attempts to describe,—"lines that rest their claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the wildness and sublimity from which they sprung." The language is Titanic. It is a legion of wild thoughts, a scene that makes the brain of the reader dizzy, and his flesh creep to contemplate; so truthful is the picture, so naturally do the gigantic ideas that belong to it, arise, that Prometheus might have thus apostrophised on the Caucasus.

His "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," commenced during his voyage round the Lake with Lord Byron, was also one of the fruits of his residence at Geneva.

As this poem embodies his peculiar tenets,—system, I might say,—I shall endeavour to shew that it is evidently derived from Plato, with whose Symposium he had been long familiar, but only appears to have commenced translating at Leghorn, in June, 1818. That ode is indeed a comment on the Symposium, as will appear by the discourse therein, of Socrates on Love. He says, "What do you imagine to be the aspect of the Supreme Beauty itself, simple, pure, uncontaminated by the intermixture of human flesh, and colours, and all other idle and unreal shapes, attendant on humanity? The Monoeidic Beauty itself! What must be the life of him who dwells upon, and gazes on that which it becomes us to seek! Think you not, that to him alone is accorded the prerogative of bringing forth, not images or shadows of virtue, for he is in contact, not with a shadow but with reality, with virtue itself, in the production and nourishment of which he becomes dear to the gods; and if such a privilege is conceded to any human being, immortal." In another part of this wonderful piece of eloquence, Socrates goes on to say,—"Man would by such contemplations learn to consider the beauty which was in souls, more excellent than that which was in form," and adds, "he would thus conduct his pupil to science, so that he might look upon the loveliness of wisdom; and that contemplating thus the *Universal Beauty*, no longer would he unworthily and meanly enslave himself to the attractions of one form in love, nor one subject of discipline in science; but would turn towards the wide ocean of *Intellectual Beauty*, and from the sight of the lovely and majestic forms which it contains, would abundantly bring forth its conceptions in philosophy, until, strengthened and confirmed, he should at length steadily contemplate one science, which is the science of *Intellectual Beauty*."

Lord Byron seems, while at Geneva, to have been imbued with similar conceptions, doubtless due to Shelley, and which were more fully inculcated during their lake excursion. In a note to Childe Harold, we find, "The feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite shores of Meillerie is invested, is of a higher and a more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion. It is the sense of the existence of Love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our participation in its good and its glory. It is the great principle of the universe, which is the more condensed, but not less manifold; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole."

This passage bears strong internal evidence of having been dictated, if not written, by Shelley, for Lord Byron was, with the bulk of mankind, a believer in the existence of matter and spirit, which Shelley so far refined, upon the theory of Berkley, as to superadd thereto some abstraction, of which, not as a substitute for Deity, according to Mr. Moore, but as a more exalted idea of the attributes of Deity, the bishop never dreamed; thus differing from the Pantheism of Wordsworth and Coleridge, inasmuch, as on the deification of Nature, found in their early works, Shelley built a deeper and more ethereal philosophy, rendering not only the whole creation into spirit, but worshipping it under the idealism of Intellectual Beauty and Universal Love. And speaking of the Lakists, so successfully imitated by Lord Byron in his third canto of Childe Harold, for he was not very particular from whom he borrowed, Shelley, "Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,"

resolved not to tread in their steps, but to work out for himself, if not a new, certainly an untried system in poetry, which he had conceived at Oxford, on reading Plato—from a translation, Mr. Hogg says, before he could master the original; a system not built on nonentities, as styled by Mr. Moore, with his materialist ideas, but the types of *Him* who is all beauty and love —types that are brought home to every deeply thinking mind—a system whose elements are the most comprehensive and spirit-stirring, and to which he ever remained true. Well might he say,—

"I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
I call the phantasms of a thousand hours,
Each from his voiceless grave—they have in visioned
    bowers,
Of studious zeal, or love's delight,
Outwatched me with the envious night.
They know that never joy illumed my brow,
Unlinked with hope; that thou wouldst free

This world from its dark slavery;
That thou, O, *Awful Loveliness!*
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express."

Schiller (and it may be fanciful, but I have often, with the Hindoos, and their great lawgiver, Menu, who places great faith in names, thought it a singular coincidence, that three of the greatest poets, Shakspeare, Schiller, and Shelley, should all have theirs commencing with a syllable so indicative, (according to Hemstrius and Walter Whiter, the two profoundest philologists, of force)—Schiller made the basis of his philosophy that of Kant; and dry and abstract as that philosophy is, he, with his great genius, contrived to interweave it into his mighty lyrics, and to turn mathematics into poetry. His "Ideale and Das Laben," of which I shall speak hereafter, is a proof of the marvellous faculty he possessed of making reality subservient to imagination, and I cannot help thinking that Shelley was well acquainted with this, and other of the odes on which his system is based. Indeed, the spirit of his Æsthetics has somewhat, though not so much, of the daring of Schiller.

"Aber flüchlet aus der Sinne Schranken,
In die Freiheit der Gedanken."
&c. &c.

"Mit der Menschen Widerstand, verschwindet
Auch des Gottes Majestat."

What is this but,

"Till human hearts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgment throne
Of its own aweless soul"?

And is not

"Wenn ihr in der Menscheit traurigen Blesse,
Steht vor des Gesizes Grösse,"—

"Till in the *nakedness* of false and true,
We stand before our Lord, each to receive his due!"

The twelfth stanza of "The Ideal and Actual," in which Humanity appeals against the will of Heaven—a stanza audacious in its language as that of a fallen Satan,—has more than one reflex in passages of Shelley's earlier works, that breathe all the sublimity of Prometheus, when bound upon Caucasus, he neither repented his deed nor confessed his wrong. Such outbursts in suffering—and who had suffered more from the world's wrong than Schiller—are perhaps worthier of Carl Moor than a philosopher; but to poets it may be allowed to dare all things, and not a voice has ever been raised against Schiller by any of his country's critics, on account of the boldness of this, or other of his lyrical productions. In the present state of society, from the imperfection of education, they are harmless speculations, and no more intelligible to the bulk of mankind than the systems of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, whose theories are a boundless and troubled ocean, where the navigator is continually fancying that the clouds in the distance are islands of the blest, till he approaches, and finds them but a congregation of vapours. Yet still he sails on with the prospect of land, ever buoyed up with hopes which he cannot renounce, though they are constantly frustrated,—theories that lead to no other result that scepticism; and hence, the last of these so-called philosophers, carries on the arguments of his predecessors *ad absurdum*, obliged to assume, that Being and No Being are the same, a verbal sophistry in itself feeble, but as a specimen of logic, pitiable. Well then might Fichte's pupil, Schelling, say, that "Philosophy commences where common sense terminates."

The train of ideas by which these misty Transcendentalists arrive at such deductions, would require a volume to trace; but it may be added, that these vain abstractions have plunged many a disciple of the Berlin school in the ocean of doubt and perplexity, and peopled many a madhouse with victims.

In this account of Shelley's three months residence at Geneva, I cannot pass over in silence a circumstance that occurred there,—Lord Byron's *liaison* with Miss Clara C—— a near connection, —not, as Mr. Moore says, a near relative—of

Mrs. Shelley. I remember her in 1820, living *en pension* at Florence, then twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age. She might have been mistaken for an Italian, for she was a *brunette* with very dark hair and eyes. Her history was then a profound secret, but as it has been told by Lord Byron's historian, may find a place here without any indiscretion on my part. As she possessed considerable accomplishments—spoke French and Italian, particularly the latter, with all its *nuances* and niceties—she was much courted by the Russian coterie, a numerous and fashionable one in that city. Though not strictly handsome at that time, for she had had much to struggle with, and mind makes its ravages in the fairest, most, she was engaging and pleasing, and possessed an *esprit de societè* rare among our countrywomen. From her personal appearance at that time, I should conceive, that when Byron formed an intimacy with her at Geneva in 1816, she must have been strikingly handsome. It has been supposed that his sonnet to

Genevra was intended for her; and though in some respects the portrait is unlike, in drawing her, the noble poet might not perhaps wish to make it too faithful, to be recognised. She was not altogether a stranger to Byron when they met at Secheron; for, as he was about to quit London for the continent, in the spring of that year, after his mysterious repudiation by Lady Byron, she had an interview with him, for the purpose of obtaining an engagement at Drury Lane, where I have no doubt she would have distinguished herself as an actress; but which object, his recent resignation of office as chairman of the committee of management, precluded him, as he explained to her, from forwarding. She had accompanied the Shelleys, as may be already conjectured, on this their tour, and passed the summer with them at Mont Allegre; and here it was that Byron's acquaintance with this lady was renewed. I do not accuse him of any systematic seduction as regards Miss C. She was of a fearless and independent character; despised the opinion of the world, looking upon the law of marriage as of human invention, having been early imbued with the doctrines of Mary Wollstonecraft, and entertaining high notions of the rights of women. The sex are fond of rakes: a strange infatuation! It is said that Byron's attentions were irresistible; and when they were enhanced by verses, the very essence of *feeling*, Clara's fall could not be doubtful.

I have reason to believe, however, that this intrigue was carried on with the greatest secrecy; and that neither the Shelleys nor Polidori were for a long time privy to it: perhaps also, it arose out of some momentary frailty and impulse, from some fatal "importunity and opportunity," in which the senses rather than the heart were engaged—a momentary intoxication, that the dictates of returning reason cooled into indifference on both sides.

The mystery, however, could not be kept—even if at the latter end of August—they landed, I think, in England, on the 6th of September—it was one; for the mystery *soon revealed itself*. She gave birth in due time, to a daughter, who was called Allegra, from Mont Allegre.

Some foul and infamously calumnious slander, relating to this *accouchement*, gave rise to the dark insinuations afterwards thrown out in the Quarterly Review, by the writer of the critique on the Revolt of Islam, where the lampooner says, at the conclusion of the article, "If we might withdraw the veil of private life, and tell all we know about Shelley, it would be indeed a disgusting picture that we should exhibit; but it would be an unanswerable comment to our text," for "it is not easy for those who read only, to conceive how much low selfishness, how much unmanly cruelty, are consistent with the laws of this universal and lawless love."

This prying into private life, and founding on senseless gossip, such foul and infamous accusations, was unworthy of the most scurrilous of those weekly journals that pander to the evil passions of society; but most disgraceful to a review of so high a character as the *Quarterly*. Shelley had been, however, as I have mentioned above, long before the appearance of this article, a victim to the scandal. With his contempt of the world's opinion, where he felt a consciousness of no wrong, as far as regarded this unfortunate connexion, he bore the obloquy unflinchingly, rather than divulge what he had given his word to Lord Byron to conceal. Allegra, when a few months old, was carried by a Swiss nurse, and delivered to Lord Byron, then at Venice.

No part of Lord Byron's conduct is more enigmatical than his neglect of this interesting young woman; and the reason of his making no settlement on the mother of his child, after withdrawing it from her care, is one of the problems I leave others to solve in this riddle of a man. I often heard him speak of Allegra as recorded in the Conversations. It is to her Shelley alludes in his Julian and Madalo, where he says, that whilst waiting in his palace for its lord,

"With his child he played;
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,
A serious, subtle—wild, yet gentle being;
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing;
With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes, they seem
Twin mirrors of Italian heavens—yet gleam
With such deep meaning, as we never see
But in the human countenance. With me
She was a special favourite. I had nursed
Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first
To this bleak world; and yet she seemed to know
On second sight, her ancient playfellow;
For after the first shyness was worn out,
We sate there rolling billiard balls about,
When the Count entered."

A regard for children, singular and touching, is an unerring and most engaging indication of a benevolent mind. "That this characteristic was not wanting in Shelley, might be demonstrated," says his friend Hogg, "by numerous examples, that crowd upon recollection, each of them bearing the strongly impressed stamp of individuality; for genius renders every surrounding circumstance significant and important. In one of our rambles we were traversing the bare, squalid, ugly, corn-yielding country, that lies, if I remember rightly, to the south-west. The hollow road ascended a hill, and near the summit, Shelley observed a female child leaning against the bank on the right. It was of a mean, dull, and unattractive aspect, and older than its stunted growth denoted. The little girl was oppressed with cold, by hunger, and by a vague feeling of abandonment. It was not easy to draw from her blue lips an intelligent history of her condition. Love, however, is at once credulous and apprehensive, and Shelley immediately decided that she had been deserted, and with his wonted precipitation, (for in the career of humanity his active spirit knew no pause) he proposed different schemes for the permanent relief of the poor foundling. I answered, that it was desirable in the first place to try to procure some food, for of this the want was manifestly the most urgent. I then climbed the hill to reconnoitre, and observed a cottage close at hand, on the left of the road. With considerable difficulty—with a gentle violence, indeed, Shelley induced the child to accompany him thither. After much delay, we procured from the people of the place some warm milk. It was a strange spectacle to watch the young poet, with the enthusiastic and intensely earnest manner that characterises the legitimate brethren of the celestial art—the heaven-born and finely inspired sons of genuine poesy—holding the wooden bowl in one hand, and the wooden spoon in the other, and kneeling on his left knee, that he might more certainly attain to her mouth. The hot milk was agreeable to the girl, and its effects were salutary, but she was obviously uneasy at the detention.

Her uneasiness increased, and ultimately prevailed; we returned with her to the place where we had found her, Shelley bearing the bowl of milk in his hand.

Here we saw some people anxiously looking for the child; as soon as the girl perceived them, she was content, and taking the bowl from Shelley, she finished it without his help."

Several other anecdotes are related of Shelley's active benevolence to children of the poor people. The passionate fondness of the Platonic philosophy, seemed to sharpen his natural affection for them, and his sympathy with their innocence. "Every true Platonist," he used to say, "must be a lover of children, for they are our masters and instructors in philosophy; the mind of a new-born infant, so far from being, as Locke affirms, a sheet of blank paper, is a pocket edition, containing every dialogue—a complete Elzivir Plato, if we can fancy such a pleasant volume, and moreover, a perfect encyclopædia, comprehending not only all the newest discoveries, but all those still more valuable and wonderful inventions that will be made hereafter."

"In consequence of this theory, upon which his active imagination loved to dwell, and which he delighted to maintain in argument, with the few persons qualified to dispute with him on the higher metaphysics; his fondness for children—a fondness innate in generous minds, was augmented and elevated, and the gentle interest expanded into a profound and philosophical sentiment. The Platonists have been illustrious in all ages, on account of the strength and permanence of their attachments.

In Shelley the parental affections were developed at an early period to an unusual extent; it was manifest, therefore, that his heart was formed by nature and by cultivation to derive the most exquisite gratification from the society of his own progeny, or the most poignant anguish from a natural or unnatural bereavement." It was his fate, in the most cruel manner, as I have already stated, to endure the last, nor was he to be spared the first of these miseries that flesh is heir to. But that time was yet distant.

Shelley, as was natural, took, we may perceive by the extract from Julian and Madalo, a lively interest in this child of Byron's; the mother having been one of the companions of his travels, in his two outwanderings,—and he it was who paid her *pension* at Florence, and supported her during his life. The little creature, the offspring of his friend's *liaison*, took, as I have heard Shelley frequently say, a violent dislike to the father, as it was just it should to one who had so cruelly renounced and injured her who gave birth to it. Nor had Byron much affection for Allegra; a Mrs. V——n, it appears, saw the infant at Mr. Hoppner's, the consul's, at Venice, and being herself childless, wished to adopt it; and Byron would have consented to the proposition, but for Shelley; indeed Lord Byron seems to have been disappointed at the failure of the arrangement; Mr. Moore says, "broken off by his refusing to grant the entire renunciation of his parental authority;"—but what parental authority could be exercised over a child in a distant country, educated by strangers? Lord Byron expresses his disappointment at the breaking off the negociation, in a letter to Mr. Hoppner, thus:

"I thought you would have an answer from Mrs. V——n. You have had *bore* enough with me, and mine already;" and on the occasion of the death of Allegra, he seems not to have acquitted himself of some blame, for he thus writes to Shelley on that occasion:—

"April, 1822.

"The blow was stunning, and unexpected, for I thought the danger was over by the long interval between the child's amelioration, and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as I best can; so far successfully, that I can go about the usual business of life with the same composure, and even greater. There is nothing to prevent your coming here to-morrow; but perhaps to-day and yester evening it was better not to have met. I do not know that I have anything to reproach in my conduct, and certainly nothing in my feelings and intentions towards the dead. But it is a moment, when we are apt to think that if this or that had been done, (meaning that, contrary to Shelley's advice, he had not left the child behind him in the convent,) such an event might have been prevented, though every day and every hour shews us that they are most natural and inevitable. I suppose that time will do its cruel work. Death has done his.

"Yours ever,

"N. BYRON."

Many years after, a lady whose talents and accomplishments are thrown into shade by the qualities of her heart, took a great interest in the mother of Allegra, and had obtained for her, or thought she had obtained, a situation as humble companion. Miss C. was too noble to conceal her story from the ear of her intended benefactress, before she entered on her office; and in consequence of her sincerity, the affair was broken off. How applicable are Shelley's words to this unfortunate lady, whose life before and since this one false step, has never had a shadow of blame thrown on it, and whose talents, manners, and accomplishments well fitted her for any circle. "Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature, the world declares against her, pitiless, unceasing war. She must be the tame slave—she must make no reprisals. *Theirs* is the right of persecution—*hers* the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy—the low and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She is the criminal, the froward, the untameable child; and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom."

Should this passage meet the eye of the over-righteous individual to whom it is applied, let her reflect on these words, and blush through her rouge with shame. No! "the cold-hearted worldling" will smile with self-complacency at her own virtue, and deem it one of the proudest and most saving acts of her life, to have repulsed and rejected the frail one. How would morality, dressed in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image, could she look in the mirror of Nature."

On Shelley's arrival in London, one of the few persons with whom he was intimate was Leigh Hunt. His acquaintance with him commenced, I believe, in 1813, and it now ripened into the closest intimacy. It was indeed an epoch in his life. Leigh Hunt was at that time joint editor of the far-famed *Examiner*, and which made him in the eyes of Lord Byron (but more so in those of his future biographer, Mr. Moore, who always had the hell of reviews before him,) a person of some consequence and weight in the literary world.

Leigh Hunt was then living at Hampstead, and here Shelley also, I believe, first met Keats.

I have been furnished by a lady, who, better even than Leigh Hunt, knew Keats, with the means of supplying many interesting particulars respecting him; so well indeed did she know him, that she might have furnished materials for that life of him promised by Mr. Brown, who unfortunately died in New Zealand before it was completed, and where Keats's MSS. and papers are said to have been lost. Keats was left fatherless at an early age, and when he came to years of discretion, was apprenticed to an apothecary, but the sight of suffering humanity, and the anatomical school, soon disgusted him with the pursuit, and he abandoned the profession of medicine, but not originally to follow the ill-named flowery paths of poetry; for an authentic anecdote is told of him, corroborative of this remark. One day, sitting dreamily over his desk, he was endeavouring to while away a tedious hour by copying some verses from memory; one of his brother apprentices looking over his shoulder, said, "Keats, what are you a poet?" It is added, he was much piqued at the *accusation*, and replied, "Poet indeed! I never composed a line in my life." The same story is told of Walter Scott, who in crossing over one of the Scotch lakes, endeavoured to put his ideas into verse, but on landing had only made two bad rhymes, and observed to the friend who accompanied him, "I shall never do for a poet." But Keats, no less than the Wizard of the North, falsified his own prophecy. Keats was ever a constant reader of Shakspeare, and I have before me a folio edition of the great dramatist's works, with notes and comments on Troilus and Cressida, and containing at the end of the volume an ode, evidently a very early attempt, which, properly for his fame, he did not publish. He might also have forborne giving to the world some other of the short poems, his first attempts in the art. We are certainly indebted for the discovery of the poetic vein in him to Leigh Hunt, and his encouragement of his young friend. But it is equally owing to Leigh Hunt that the disciple enrolled himself in what has been termed the Cockney school, and fell into a pale imitation of the Elizabethan writers, and the adoption of a language, neither Shakspearean nor Spencerian—a language neither belonging to his own time, nor to society. How well does Quintilian designate some author of his day who had a similar mania! "Sepultam scribendi artem suscitat, obliteratas restituit literas, antiquos renovat apices, abrogatas recudit literarum formulas, et ingens opus, rei literaricæ miraculum quod stupeat, &c." Thus, in the words of Dr. Johnson, speaking of two of his contemporaries, he "affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival, and thought his language more poetical, as it was more removed from common use." Such was the prevailing fault of Endymion, an unreadable poem, only redeemed by the Hymn to Pan, and a few scattered passages, Oases in the misty desert of an outworn mythology. Shelley told me that he and Keats had mutually agreed, in the same given time, (six months each,) to write a long poem, and that the Endymion, and Revolt of Islam were the fruits of this rivalry. But I shall have much to say on the subject of these poems, in the course of these memoirs; and with this introduction of the reader to Keats, let me turn to Shelley, and his eventful history.

After living some time under Leigh Hunt's roof, in the spring of 1817, Shelley took a house at Marlow, and there passed nearly a year. His choice of Buckinghamshire, and of this town, as an abode, was chiefly owing to its being at an easy distance from London, and on the banks of his favorite river the Thames. Here it was, that in addition to Prince Athanase, some minor lyrics, and part of Rosalind and Helen, he composed "The Revolt of Islam," and wrote a pamphlet, now lost, on the occasion of the Princess Charlotte's death, entitled, "The Hermit of Marlow." In the spring of 1835, I made an excursion to Marlow, in order to visit scenes, that were among the sources of inspiration of Laon and Cythna, as the first edition of The Revolt of Islam was entitled. The house he inhabited was pointed out to me, by almost the first person, a middle-aged man, of whom I enquired. It was in a retired street, and commanded no view—a comfortable abode, with gothic windows, and behind it a garden and shady orchard plot, of some extent, carpeted with the greenest turf, which must have afforded a delightful retreat in the summer noon. Not only the town itself, with its church and bridge, and old buildings, is highly picturesque, but the environs are strikingly beautiful, and remarkable for their fine country seats; Daney, so called from a Danish camp having once existed here, whose entrenchment may still be traced,—Hanneker, built by Inigo Jones, and many other noble residences, inhabited by families of wealth and distinction, diversify the landscapes, and make them an enchantment. Nor must I forget the fall of the river, over an artificial embankment immediately above the town, where the eye crossing the richest meadows, rests on the lovely beech groves of Bisham Abbey. "In no place are riches and poverty presented in more prominent contrast. Lace-making is the occupation of the poor, women being the operatives, who lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they are badly paid. The poor-laws ground to the dust those who had just risen above pauperage, and were obliged to pay them. The changes produced by peace following a long war, were heavily felt; the trade which had been their support, flowing into other channels, produced great destitution and misery, which a bad harvest contributed to enhance." Shelley had a very early sympathy for the working classes. I remember the very harrowing effect which Southey's Don Espriello's Letters produced on him in 1810 or 1811; one of the most frightful, faithful pictures ever drawn of the wretchedness, vice, and immorality that seem necessary concomitants of an overproduction of manufactures. The impression this feelingly written work made on Shelley, was ineffaceable, and gave rise to the apostrophe in Queen Mab,—

"Commerce! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
No solitary virtue dares to spring,
But poverty and wealth with equal hand
Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
The doors of premature and violent death,

To pining famine, and full-fed disease,
To all that shares the lot of human life,
Which poisoned body and soul scarce drags the chain
That lengthens as it goes, and clanks behind."

And again:

"His host of blind and unresisting dupes
The despot numbers, from his cabinet
These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
A task of cold and brutal drudgery—
Hardened to hope—insensible to fear—
Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
Mere wheels of work and articles of trade."

In a note appended to these passages, penned with all that sincerity and conviction of truth, that uncompromising spirit that characterises all his writings, a note in which he deprecates the luxury of the rich, calling it "a remedy that aggravates, while it pollutes the countless divisions of society," he adds that "the poor are set to labour—for what? Not for the food for which they famish—not for the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels—not those comforts of civilization, without which, civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage, oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him. No! for the pride of power—for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society."

In this town of Marlow, he had an opportunity, not of visiting quite such loathsome dens as described in these "Letters of a Spaniard," where the factory lords stifle their victims in the great hotbeds of crime and pollution, Manchester and Leeds,—but he saw enough to shock and disgust him. He did all in his power to alleviate the condition of the poor lace-makers of Marlow; "he visited them in their damp and fireless abodes —he supplied them with blankets and coals and food and medicines, and from tending one of the sick, caught the opthalmia, which nearly deprived him of sight."

These facts I had confirmed by a lady still resident there, one of its great ornaments, who did ample justice to Shelley's memory, and related many individual anecdotes of his benevolence and charity, that called for her warmest sympathy and admiration. I may add, that his name is still perpetuated among the inhabitants, who are proud of having harboured the poet, and counted him among their number. I was surprised indeed, considering the low and disgraceful state of education in England, to find that any of them were acquainted with his works, and hailed the circumstance as a pledge of his immortality,—and an immortal work is the Revolt of Islam.

He had originally, it would seem, after the Divine Comedy, intended to have written it in terza rima, of which he made an experiment in Prince Athanase; but soon after abandoned that metre, as too monotonous and artificial, and adopted instead the stanza of Spencer, which he wields as none have ever done before him. The fragment of Prince Athanase is valuable, as the first conception of a great picture by a great master. In this sketch of the prince, we find the germs of the character of Laon. Athanase is a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, animated by a resolution to confer the boons of civil and religious liberty on his fellow men; and the poet doubtless meant to have created for him a companion endued with the same enthusiasm. A lovelier creature than Cythna, heart never conceived—a purer love than those of Laon and Cythna words could not express. The story I shall not analyse—it is indeed treated with the simplicity of Grecian art, and might have furnished Canova or Thorwalsden with a subject for a series of *bas reliefs*.

This poem occupied six months. It was composed as he floated in his skiff on the Thames, reclined beneath its willow and alder fringed banks, or took refuge from the noonday solstician heats, in some island only the haunt of the swan. A Marlow gentleman told me, Shelley spent frequently whole nights in his boat, taking up his occasional abode at a small inn down the river, which I imagine must have been at Cookham. We find everywhere scattered about this poem, strikingly faithful drawings of the scenery near and about Marlow; and with the Revolt of Islam in my hand, I for nearly a month, traversed the stream up and down, from the sequestered and solemn solitudes of the deep woods of Clifden, on the one hand, to the open sunniness of the enamelled meadows of Henley on the other, and often fancied myself in the very spots so graphically drawn. The opening in that most graceful dedication,—

> "So now my summer task is ended, Mary,
> And I return to thee,"—

proves that he had been passing this summer in great isolation from his family, and is a tribute to the virtues of one of the noblest-minded of her sex,—"a child of glorious parents," as he styles her, and inheriting much of the talent of both, which has gained for her a name, reflecting honour on either.

The life which Shelley led at Marlow, occasionally varied by short trips to London, was, as far as the society of the place was concerned, a most isolated one. Among his principal amusements, were boating and pistol practice, and it was complained that he "frightened the place from its propriety;" and one of his neighbours pretended that she was afraid of going out for fear of being shot; no doubt a very false alarm. Among his visitors may be mentioned, Mr. Peacock, and his old college friend, Mr. Hogg; to the latter of whom we are indebted for filling up so important a chasm in Shelley's history, his Oxonian career,—materials, of which I have largely availed myself. The first of these gentlemen has not had the reputation to which Nightmare Abbey, and his other novels, justly entitled him. "They were too good for his age," as Byron said. But there is a work of Mr. Peacock's, to which a more glaring injustice has been done,—I allude to Rododendron. The first time I met with that exquisite poem, was at Paris, where I saw it lying on a lady's table. She told me it was her favourite poem, and that she read it several times every year, and with increased pleasure.

It is something to have contributed to the happiness of one human being. Shelley agreed with her as to the merits of Rododendron, for he says,—"It is a book from which I confess, I expected extraordinary success." But although containing passages that throw into shade all that Rogers and Campbell in their cold and stilted Didactics have produced, it fell dead from the press. Let the author console himself in this age of reviews and coteries, with the reflection, that the Epipsychidion met afterwards with a similar fate,—that it rose from its ashes, and that his may yet do so; if it should not, I hope that in the island where Ariosto places all the lost treasures of earth, may be preserved among those neglected works, which have like straws been swept down the current of time, for the recreation of "the *Translated*," Rododendron.

In six months of this year, to write and correct the press of such a work as Laon and Cythna, was no slight task; perhaps the mental excitement gave a diversion to his thoughts, and it must have required a rare power of self-condensation and abstraction, to have enabled him to write under the different afflictions that beset him. The publicity of the proceedings in Chancery, coupled with the death of his wife, raised a host of detractors against him; Queen Mab was universally decried, his children made over to strangers—and to crown all, his health in a very precarious state. He had formed an idea that the situation of his house at Marlow was an insalubrious one—that a warm climate was absolutely essential to him; and this, and various other reasons, among which, the conviction that the breach between himself and his relations was irreparable, weighing more than all the rest—induced him to come to a resolution of quitting England, with scarcely a hope of revisiting it.

He reached Milan on the 22d of March, 1818, and gave an interesting account of his excursion to Como, in a letter to his friend Mr. Peacock. "Since I last wrote to you, we have been at Como, looking for a house. This lake exceeds any thing I ever beheld of beauty, with the exception of the arbutus-islands of Killarney. It is long and narrow, and has the appearance of a mighty river winding among the mountains and the forests. We sailed from the town of Como to a tract of country called the Tremezina, and saw the various aspects presented by that part of the lake. The mountains between Como and that village, are covered with chesnut forests, which sometimes descend to the very verge of the lake, overhanging it with their hoary branches. But usually the immediate border of the shore is composed of laurel trees, and bay and myrtle, and wild fig-trees, and olives, which grow in the crevices of rocks, and overhang the caverns, and shadow the deep glens, which are filled with the flashing light of the waterfalls."

I have been thus minute in the description of this lake, because he here lays the scene of Rosalind and Helen. I was mistaken in supposing he had past the summer at Como; in fact his stay there was confined to two days, for he found the villas far too expensive for him.

Regrets that so few of Shelley's letters should have been saved, will be awakened by the perusal of those which during his first visit to Italy he addressed to Mr. Peacock. These letters are very valuable, nor do more splendid specimens of writing exist in any language. It is true that (as confessed by Mrs. Shelley) his early impressions regarding the Italians were formed in ignorance and precipitation, and became altogether altered after a longer stay in the country; and that his knowledge of painting, though he exhibits a high feeling of art, was a very limited one; and his criticisms on the works of particular masters, shew but a very superficial acquaintance with the subject. He used to say that he understood statuary, and there he was right—but not painting; not meaning that he was in any way insensible to the merits of pictures—of the divine Raphael's, for instance, whom I have often thought Shelley resembled in expression, (I allude to the portrait in the Louvre) as well as genius, though it took a different direction,—but that he did not know the styles of different masters—a knowledge which is only to be acquired by a retentive memory, and the faculty of comparison. Of his appreciation of the ancient sculptures, I shall have to speak hereafter,—*there* he was at home.

After sojourning at Milan for nearly a month, during which he appears to have received but one letter from England, on the 1st May he proceeded towards Pisa. He was much struck with the well irrigated, rich plain of the *Milanese*, and the sight of the vineyards about Palma revived all his classical recollections—his memories of the Georgics. "The vines," he says, "here, are particularly picturesque. They are trelissed on immense stakes, and the trunks of them are moss-grown and hoary with age. Unlike the French vines, which creep lowly along the ground, they form rows of intertwined bowers, which when the leaves are green, and the red grapes hanging among their branches, will afford a delightful shadow to those who sit upon the moss beneath."

From Pisa he proceeded to Leghorn, where he staid a month. There he made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, the latter of whom, he says, was very amiable and accomplished, and by the former of whom he was initiated in the beauties of Calderon, and purchased some odd volumes of his plays, and Autos, which were ever after his constant companions. He now retreated from the summer heats to the baths of Lucca, posted in umbrageous chesnut forests. He did not there forget to visit the *Prato fiorito,* a spot on the mountain, carpeted with jonquils, from which the place takes the name of the Meadow of Flowers. So powerful is their odour, that many persons have fainted with their excess of sweetness, and Shelley has described to me, that they were nearly producing on him the same effect.

Some time in August, leaving his family at the baths, he set out for Florence. The view from the Boboli gardens, in a note which he shewed me—a view almost unparalleled—inspired him with the following burst of poetry: "You see below Florence, a smokeless city, with its domes and spires occupying the vale, and beyond to the right, the Apennines, whose base extends even to the walls. The green valleys of the mountains which gently unfold themselves upon the plains, and the intervening hills, covered with vineyards and olive plantations, are occupied by the villas, which are, as it were, another city—a Babylon of palaces and gardens. In the midst of the picture rolls the Arno, through woods, and bounded by the aerial snowy heights of the Apennines. On the right a magnificent buttress of craggy hills, overgrown with wilderness, juts out in many shapes over a lovely valley, and approaches the walls of the city. Cascini and other villages occupy the pinnacles and abutments of those hills, over which are seen at intervals the aerial mountains, hoary with snow, and intersected with clouds. The valley below is covered with cypress groves, whose obeliskine forms of intense green, pierce the grey shadow of the wintry hill that overlooks them. The cypresses too of the garden form a magnificent foreground of accumulated verdure, pyramids of dark green rising out of a mass, between which are cut, like caverns, recesses, conducting into walks."

His present visit to Florence was a short one. He was anxious to reach Venice. There he found Lord Byron domiciliated. Julian and Madalo, which he calls a Conversation, from its familiar style, gives a very valuable, and, no doubt, faithful picture of the manner of life led there by the noble poet, and the sketch of him in the preface is highly valuable. Shelley says, that without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, he resides chiefly in his magnificent palace in that city. "He is," he adds, "a person of most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country." In his sketch, he does not spare his friend, and winds it up with,—"Madalo is proud, because I can find no word to express the concentered and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no person can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming. He is cheerful, frank, and witty."

Childe Harold and Beppo are not more different characters than were the Byron of Geneva, and the Byron of Venice. Mr. Moore, who has delighted to rake up all the filthy details of his low amours in that degraded city, of which Shelley speaking, says, "he had no conception of the excess to which avarice, cowardice, superstition, ignorance, powerless lust, and all the brutality which degrade human nature, could be carried, till he had passed a few days there." He has also drawn a portrait of his noble poet friend, which reminds us of what Chesterfield said of Bolingbroke: "His youth was there distracted by the tumult and storm of pleasures in which he most licentiously triumphed, devoid of all decorum. His fine imagination often heated and exhausted the body in deifying the prostitute of the night, and his convivial joys were pushed to all the extravagance of frantic Bacchanals. His passions injured both his understanding and character."

But without quoting what Shelley says, in speaking of his dissipations, Julian and Madalo is also precious as a faithful picture of Venice. We seem to sail with the two friends in their gondola—to view with them that gorgeous sunset, from Lido, when—

"They turned, and saw the city, and could mark,
How from its many isles in the broad gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heaven."

The madhouse, so graphically drawn, on the island, I know well; but whether the harrowing history of the maniac was imaginary, or but the dim shadowing out of his own sufferings, and a prognostic of what *might* befal himself, I cannot pretend to determine. Who can read it without shedding tears? and how thrilling is the comment of Madalo, on the destinies of himself and Julian!

"Most wretched men
Are cradled into poverty by wrong—
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

I have often heard Shelley expatiate on Venice with rapture. It is a city that realised all his fairy visions of happiness. The contrast of its former greatness with its present state of degradation and decay—its once proud independence, when it gave laws to the Mediterranean, and now abject slavery to the Goth, were fruitful sources of poetic inspiration. He might here "have dreamed away life," he said, "in that stillness and repose that was a balm to his wounded spirit,—have

> "Read in gondolas by day, or night,
> Having the little brazen lamp alight,
> Unseen, uninterrupted."

Books, pictures were there. Casts from all the statues that were twin-born with poetry, All

> "Men seek in towns, with little to recal
> Regrets for the green country."

And he adds, "that if he had been an unconnected man, he should never have quitted it." But Venice was not destined to be his dreamland.

Circumstances rendering it eligible that Shelley should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of Venice, he sent for Mrs. Shelley and his children from the baths of Lucca, and accepted the offer of Lord Byron, to lend him the use of his villa near Este; and here they took up their temporary abode. "I Capuccini, which takes its name from a Capuchin convent suppressed by the French, is picturesquely situate. The house is overhung by the ancient castle of Este, the habitation of owls and bats, but formerly the residence of the Medici family, before they migrated to Florence. From the garden they looked over the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which they saw the sun and moon rise and set, and all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds, pleasures which they enjoyed the more after the contrast of the secluded chesnut-overshadowing ravine of the *Bagni di Lucca.*" Here an anecdote is told of Shelley, that is highly idiosyncratic of him, and marks that "gentleness and firmness which met without destroying each other," in his character. Their infant girl was seized with one of those disorders prevalent in that season from the heat, and there being no good medical advice nearer than Venice, they hastened towards it with the child. His firmness and intrepidity must have been indeed great, when they could so far overawe an Austrian guard, as to make them disobey orders. He had no passport, but they allowed him to quit Fusina without one.

The loss of this child—the first misfortune of that kind its parents had to endure—hastened their journey towards Rome, after only a three weeks' sojourn at Este, and they arrived with their son William at Ferrara on the 8th of November.

Speaking of Tasso, he says, "that his situation was widely different from that of any persecuted being at the present day, for public opinion might now, at length, be awakened to an echo that would startle the oppressor." Alas! he did not find it so himself. They went afterwards to see the prison in the hospital of Santa Anna. "The dungeon," he says, "is low and dark, and when I say it is really a very decent dungeon, I speak of one who has seen those in the Doge's palace at Venice. But it is a horrible abode for the coarsest and meanest thing that ever wore the shape of man, much more for one of delicate susceptibilities, and elevated fancies. It is low, and has a grated window, and being sunk some feet below the level of the earth, is full of unwholesome damps."

I shall not trace the journey of the Shelleys through Bologna, Rimini, Foligno, along the Via Flaminia, and Terni. But I cannot resist giving an extract from one of his admirable letters to Mr. Peacock, containing a description of the Cascata di Marmore—the fall of the Vellino. "The glacier of, and the source of the Aveiron is the greatest spectacle I ever saw. This is the second. Imagine a river, sixty feet in breadth, with a vast volume of waters, the outlet of a great lake among the mountains, falling three hundred feet into a sightless gulph of snow-white vapour, which bursts up for ever and for ever from a circle of black crags, and thence leaping downwards, makes five or six other cataracts, each a hundred and fifty feet high, which exhibit, on a smaller scale, and with beautiful and sublime variety, the same appearances. But words, and far less painting, will not express it."

In reading this, I could not help thinking of Wilson's enthusiastic exclamation,—" Well done, water !" and excepting Ruysdael, perhaps no one ever represented on canvass what Shelley goes on to depict. " The ever-moving stream, coming in thick and tawney folds, flaking off. like solid snow, gliding down a mountain. The imagination is bewildered with it."

I shall now bring the travellers to Rome.

In his first visit to the capitol of the world, after a hasty glance at its ruins, he passed on to Naples, where he hoped to find in its mild climate, some alleviation of his bodily sufferings, and in the scenery of its bay, a soothing balsam to the wounds of his harassed and weary spirit. But this object was not to be attained. Nor did his excursions to Venice prove a " medicine to his mind diseased." I have often heard him dilate with rapture on the beauty of that divine Bay, as he hung over the side of the boat, and gazed on the subaqueous ruins of the wrecked palaces overspread with marine flowering plants and weeds, that grow luxuriantly about them. In speaking of these, he observed that they sympathise, like those on land, with the change of the season.

A singular circumstance occurred to Shelley, which, after his death, I talked over with Lord Byron at Pisa—for he was equally acquainted with the story, as told to us mutually, and which he more than once made a subject of conversation with me.

The night before his departure from London, in 1814, he received a visit from a married lady, young, handsome, and of noble connections, and whose disappearance from the world of fashion, in which she moved, may furnish to those curious in such inquiries a clue to her identity.

The force of love could not go further, when a person so richly endowed, as he described her, could so far forget the delicacy of her sex, and the regard due to the character of woman, as to make the following confession :—" I have long known you in your Queen Mab. In the empassioned tenderness of your picture of Ianthe, I have read and understood the heart that inspired it. In your uncompromising passion for liberty—your universal and disinterested benevolence—your aspiring after the amelioration of the state of mankind, and the happiness of your species, and more than all, in your sentiments respecting the equality of conditions, and the unfettered union between the sexes,—your virtues, removed from all selfish considerations, and a total disregard of opinion, have made you in my eyes the *beau ideal* of what I have long sought for in vain. I long for the realisation of my day and night dream. I come, after many vain and useless struggles with myself, to tell you that I have renounced my husband, my name, my family and friends ; and have resolved, after mature deliberation, to follow you through the world, to attach my fortune, which is considerable, to yours, in spite of all the obloquy that be cast on me."

Shelley was at that moment, on the eve, as I have said, of parting from England with one, to whom he was devotedly attached;—none but a perfect gentleman, (and none, as admitted by Byron, surpassed him in the qualities of one,) could have succeeded in acting with a high-born and high-bred woman, a becoming part in such an arduous scene. He could not but feel deep gratitude—admiration without bounds, for that enthusiastic and noble-minded person; who had not shrunk from a confession—a confession hard indeed for her to have made—an avowal of a love that must have cost her so many struggles to have clothed in words.

I shall not endeavour to throw the whole of this interview into dialogue, or to paint the language in which he extricated himself from the painful task of relieving both, by the explanation of his engagement; or in what terms he endeavoured to infuse a balm into her wounded soul, to soothe her hurt pride,—I had almost said, hurt affection.

Shelley detailed to me at much length, and with more than his accustomed eloquence, their parting; and though I do not pretend to remember his exact words, their purport has not escaped me.

She said she had listened to his explanation with patience; she ought to listen to it with resignation. The pride of a woman—the pride of a ————, might have revolted to acknowledge, much more to feel, that she loved in vain; she said she might conceal all that she endured—might have died under the blow she had received—-that death-blow to her heart, and all its hopes, or might spurn him from her with disdain, chase him from her presence with rage, or call to her aid revenge, that cicatrice to a wounded spirit; but that she would rise superior to such littleness. Had she been base—very base—she should no longer have esteemed him,—that she believed herself worthy of him, and would not prove she was otherwise, by leaving on his memory a feeling towards her of contempt. You are rich, she added, in resources; comfort at least by your pity a heart torn by your indifference; lend me some aid to endure the trial you have brought upon me—the greatest it is allotted to one of us to endure—blighted hopes—a life of loneliness—withered affections.

"Cold indeed would have been my heart," said Shelley to her, "if I should ever cease to acknowledge with gratitude, the flattering, the undeserved preference you have so nobly confessed to me; the first, the richest gift a woman can bestow—the only one worth having. Adieu, may God protect, support, and bless you! Your image will never cease to be associated in my mind with all that is noble, pure, generous, and lovely. Adieu."

Thus they parted; but this meeting, instead of extinguishing, only seemed to fan the flame in the bosom of the *Incognita*. This infatuated lady followed him to the Continent. He had given her a clue to his place of destination, Geneva. She traced him to Secheron—used to watch him with her glass in his water parties on the lake. On his return to England, he thought she had long forgotten him; but her constancy was untired. During his journey to Rome and Naples, she once lodged with him at the same hotel, *en route*, and finally arrived at the latter city the same day as himself.

He must have been more or less than man, to have been unmoved by the devotedness of this unfortunate and infatuated lady. At Naples, he told me that they met, and when he learnt from her all those particulars of her wanderings, of which he had been previously ignorant; and at Naples—she died.

Mrs. Shelley, who was unacquainted with all those circumstances, in a note to the poems written at Naples, describes what Shelley suffered during this winter, which she attributes solely to physical causes, but which had a far deeper root. "Constant and poignant physical sufferings," she says, "exhausted him, and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy, and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses which *he hid from me, from fear of wounding me*, poured forth morbid, but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness;" and she adds, "*that it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he shewed, was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.*"

Had she been able to disentangle the threads of the mystery, she would have attributed his feelings to more than purely physicial causes. Among the verses which she had probably never seen till they appeared in print, was "The Invocation to Misery," an idea taken from Shakspeare—Making Love to Misery, betokening his soul lacerated to rawness by the tragic event above detailed—the death of his unknown adorer. The state of his mind must indeed have been bordering on madness—hanging on the devouring edge of mental darkness, when he could give utterance to those wonderful lines:—

"Hasten to the bridal bed!
Underneath the grave 'tis spread!
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid!
We may rest, and none forbid.

Kiss me! Oh! thy lips are cold!
Round my neck thine arms enfold,
They are *soft*—yet chill and dead,
And thy tears upon my heart,
Burn like points of frozen lead."

The epithet *soft* in the last stanza, and *burn like points of frozen lead*, surpass in the sublimity of horror, anything in our own, or any other language.

This poem was shewn to me by Shelley in 1821, and by his permission, with many others, copied into my common-place book, and appeared for the first time in the Shelley papers in 1833.

Not less affecting are the lines written In Despondency.* How horrible is the calm in the tempest of his affection—how exquisite the pathos conveyed by the closing stanza :—

> " Yet now despair itself is mild,
> Even as the winds and waters are.
> I could lie down like a tired child,
> And weep away this life of care,
> Which I have borne, and yet must bear,
> Till Death like sleep might steal on me,
> And I might feel in the warm air,
> My heart grow cold, and hear the sea
> Breathe o'er my *outworn* brain its last monotony."

The line stands thus in my copy—*outworn* for dying.

And again, after her death, whether a violent or a natural one I know not, what a desolation of spirit there is in—

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* Mrs. Shelley has omitted a line in the transcript of a stanza of this poem. It stood thus :—

> " Blue hills and snowy mountains wear
> The purple moon's transparent might,—
> The breath of the west wind is light," &c.

"I sit upon the sands alone—
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me—and a tone
Arises from its mingled motion,
How sweet! *if any heart could share in my emotion.*"

I imagine also that we owe the beautiful gem entitled To a Faded Violet, which made its first appearance anonymously, in, I think, The Indicator, to this occurrence.

"A withered, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart that yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.
I weep—my tears revive it not.
I sigh—it breathes none back to me.
Its mute and uncomplaining lot,
Is such as mine must be."

Shelley told me that his departure from Naples was precipitated by this event. The letters he wrote from thence furnish another among the many proofs what an imperfect and little-to-be-trusted medium they are for biography. Who would have supposed from their tenor, that his mind was subject to any extraordinary excitement? Retreading his steps through the Pontine marshes, so graphically described in his Fragment Mazinghi, as,

> " Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
> All overgrown with weeds and long rank grasses,
> And where the huge and speckled aole made,
> Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,"

he reached Rome for the second time in March, 1819, and there took up his abode, having completed, before his departure, the first Act of his Prometheus Unbound. His impressions of the City of the World, as contained in his communications to Mr. Peacock, are clothed in such glowing and eloquent language, as to make us regret that their correspondence should so soon have been discontinued; for with the exception of about eighteen letters addressed to that gentleman, although everything he writes is valuable, as tending to develope his life and character, the remaining forty-nine are of very inferior interest.

There is something inspiring in the very atmosphere of Rome. Is it fanciful, that being encircled with images of beauty—that in contemplating works of beauty, such as Rome and the Vatican can only boast—that by gazing on the scattered limbs of that mighty Colossus, whose shadow eclipsed the world,—we should catch a portion of the sublime—become a portion of that around us?

Schiller, in his Don Carlos, makes Posa say,—

> "In his Escurial
> The Artist sees, and gloats upon some work
> Of art divine, till he becomes a part
> Of its identity."

Certain it is, that such produce at Rome, what they are incapable of conceiving elsewhere, and at which they are themselves most sincerely astonished.

No wonder, then, that Shelley should here have surpassed himself in all that he produced. He drenched his spirit to intoxication in the deep-blue sky of Rome. Among his haunts were the baths of Caracalla. Situate as they are at a considerable distance outside the present walls of Rome, they are but little frequented, and their solitude made them an especial favourite with the poet. He seems to have known "all the intricate labyrinths of the ruins, and to have traced every narrow and ill-defined footpath that winds among their entangled wildernesses of myrtle, myrtelus, and bay, and flowering laurestinus, and a thousand nameless plants, sown by the wandering winds—an undecaying investitute of Nature, to soften down their vast desolation." Here, he told me, he completed two more acts of his Prometheus.

The chorus in the second act, scene 2, was doubtless inspired by this scene.

"Some cloud of dew
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl on the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew,

And bends, and then fades silently
One frail and fair anemone.
And when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
Has found the cleft, through which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon,
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift heavens, that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite ;
And the gloom divine is all around,
And underneath is the mossy ground.

But the Praxitilean shapes of the Vatican and the Capitol, were alike sources whence he drew his inspiration in this truly classical drama ; a bold and successful attempt, not so much to revive a lost play of Æschylus, as to make the allegory a peg whereon to hang his abstruse and imaginative theories—an object he never lost sight of in any of his poems. The last Act, a hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecy regarding Prometheus, was not conceived or executed till several months later, at Florence. Mrs. Shelley has given so excellent an analysis of this drama, that it would be vain for me to attempt it. Shelley believed, with Schiller, that mankind had only to will, and that there should be no evil, and would be none. That man could be so perfectionised as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of creation, was the cardinal point of his system; and he had so conquered himself, and his own passions, that he was a living testimony to the truth of his doctrine. Such he had depicted Laon, the enemy and victim of tyranny in the Revolt of Islam, and here took a more idealised image of the same subject in Prometheus, typifying a being full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph, emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good. There was one point on which I had several discussions with Shelley, his introduction of the Furies into his sublime drama. These allegorical personages of the Greek mythology, I contended ought to have had no place in his Prometheus. Their attributes were widely different from those which should have been called into exercise. They properly formed a prominent feature in the machinery of the Orestian story, and Schiller admirably introduces them in his "Cranes of Ibycchus," but Jove knew that Prometheus was beyond their power. His conscience must have been at rest, he had nothing to unsay or wish undone; all their tortures must have been ineffectual as against the Firebearer, and well might Earth exclaim, when Prometheus says, "It doth repent me,"—

"Misery! O Misery!
That Jove at length has vanquished thee!"

I cannot help thinking that Bia and Cratos, the agents of the new ruler of Olympus, as employed by Vulcan in the Prometheus Bound, would have been fitter instruments of the tyrant, and much more appropriate engines in the hands of Mercury. One objection certainly is, that after the first scene of that wonderful drama, it would have been an arrant failure, and daring plagiarism, to have made them speak; for what words would not have been a pale adumbration of that which Shelley knew to be inimitable?

Not to dwell on this—I will add, that with all its choral magnificence, a strain of inspiration that is totally unreachable by the greatest spirits of this or any other age, this sublime poem fell almost dead from the press. A literary man, who has without a tythe of his genius obtained a hundredfold more reputation, with a sneer said to me—"Prometheus Unbound. It is well named. Who would bind it?" Such is the kind of criticism with which, even by persons of enlarged education, but most narrow minds, this lyrical drama was received.

But the Thermæ of Caracalla had other haunts to divide Shelley's affections: he has left us a picture of the Colyseum, which, though in prose, surpasses all lyrical poetry; and here it was that he laid the scene of a tale that promised to rival Corinne. Like Madame de Stael, he meant to idealize himself in the hero; and there were times when the portrait was not overcharged, and which I shall give in the words of that fragment. " A figure only visible at Rome at night, or in solitude, and then only to be seen amid the dilapidated temples of the Forum, or gliding away through the weed-grown galleries of the Colyseum, crossed their path. His face, though emaciated, displayed the elementary outline of exquisite grace. It was a face once seen never to be forgotten. The mouth and the moulding of the chin resembled the eager and impassioned tenderness of the statues of Antinous, but instead of the effeminate sullenness of the eye, and the narrow smoothness of the forehead, there was an expression of profound and piercing thought. The brow was clear and open, and his eyes deep, like two wells of chrystal water that reflect the all-beholding heavens. Over all was spread a timid expression of diffidence and retirement, that contrasted strangely with the abstract and fearless character which predominated in his form and gestures. He avoided, in an extraordinary degree, what is called society, but was occasionally seen to converse with some accomplished foreigner, whose appearance might attract him in his solemn haunts. He spoke Italian with fluency, though with a peculiar but sweet accent."

This fragment he allowed me to copy, and I have always looked upon it as on the Torso of some exquisite statue, and during the visits that at different periods I have made to Rome, I read it as many times, sitting, as he says, "on some isolated capital of a fallen column in the arena," and ever with a new delight. It is worth all that "Nibbi" and Hobhouse and Eustace with their show-knowledge, the common stuff of the earth, the very slime of pedantry, "have left behind them."

Shelley's taste and feeling in works of ancient art, were, as might be supposed, most refined. Statuary was his passion. He contended that "the slaughter-house and the dissecting-room were not the sources whence the Greeks drew their inspiration. It was to be attributed to the daily exhibitions of the human form in all its ease and symmetry in their gymnasia. The sculptors were not mere mechanicians—they were citizens and soldiers, animated with the love of their country. "We must rival them in their virtues," he adds, "before we can come up to them in their compositions." The hard, harsh, affected style of the French school, and Canova, he could never endure, and used to contrast what are considered the masterpieces of the latter with those of the age of Pericles, where the outline of the form and features is, as in one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures, so soft as scarcely to be traceable by the eye. He considered the Perseus so ridiculously overpraised by Forsyth, a bad imitation of the Apollo, and said, after seeing the great conceited figurante of the Pitti, Canova's Venus, "Go and visit the modest little creature of the Tribune."

I have not yet spoken of the work which occupied him at Rome—the greatest tragedy of modern times, the Cenci. A writer in the Edinburgh Review has said that Shelley "selected the story on account of its horrors, and that he found pleasure in dwelling on those horrors." Never did a reviewer more thouroghly misunderstand or misinterpret an author. Shelley's loadstar was the Barbarini Beatrice. The tragedy ought to have been entitled Beatrice Cenci, for this is the prominent character. The Cenci himself, his atrocious crimes and abhorrent vices, are treated as if he shrunk from, as though there was almost a pollution, not in the mention of, but the bare thought of them. It cannot be denied also, that in the Cenci he found materials for developing his system, so forcibly dilated on in the preface, —The Spirit of Romanism. Whilst writing it, he told me that he heard in the street the oft-repeated cry, "Cenci, Cenci," which he at first thought the echo of his own soul, but soon learnt was one of the cries of Rome—Cenci meaning old rags.

But to be serious,—a MS. containing an account of this *cause celèbre* had been seen by Shelley, it appears, before he came to Rome. There is scarcely a public library in Italy that does not contain such a MS. I found it in the Berio at Genoa, bound up with another almost as remarkable trial, that of Mascalbruni, the Treasurer of Innocent X.—and in that pope we see the reflex of Clement VIII. in his corruption, and more still in his *peculiar* profligacy; and to those who wish to make a good magazine article, I would recommend them the perusal of this latter process. The church of Rome, and God's vicegerent upon earth, are not spared in the Narrative.

To return to the Cenci.—Just as I was about to speak of Shelley's Cenci, was placed in my hand an Indicator of July 26, 1820; and when I had read that masterly critique, one of the noblest pieces of writing in our language, I abandoned as hopeless the task of analysing it myself. Almost every line of that tragedy might be quoted, and indeed very many have been, but there is a passage which was pointed out to me by a great writer, which escaped Leigh Hunt's observation, and strikes me as most profound. It is Cenci's first speech to the Cardinal emissary of the pope.

> "The third of my possessions—
> Aye, I have heard the nephew of the pope
> Had sent his architect to view the ground,
> Meaning to build a villa on my vines,
> The next time I compounded with his uncle,—
> I little thought he should outwit me so."

Leigh Hunt, the theatrical critic, κατ' ἐξοχην, sums up his paper with,—"Mr. Shelley in this work reminds us of some of the most strenuous and daring of our old dramatists,—not by any means as an imitator, though he has studied them, but as a bold, elemental imaginator, and a framer of mighty lines. He possesses also, moreover, what those to whom we more particularly allude, did not possess, great sweetness of nature, and enthusiasm for good, and his style is as it ought to be, the offspring of the high mixtures. It disproves the adage of the Latin poet. Majesty and love do sit on one throne in the lofty buildings of his poetry, and they will be found there at a late, and we trust happier day, on a seat immortal as themselves."

Words written with the prophetic confidence of their truth.

Shelley had formed strong hopes of getting this play performed at Covent Garden, and that Miss O'Neale, whom he had seen before leaving London, and often spoke of as his *beau ideal* of female actors, would take the part of Beatrice. His disappointment was therefore great, when Mr. Harris pronounced the subject so objectionable that he could not submit the part to that gifted lady, but expressed a desire that the author should write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. The manager was right in thinking that the Cenci was unadapted for the stage. If no one can read it without shedding abundant tears, who could have endured the representation of the character of Beatrice by Miss O'Neale? Of this Shelley himself seems to have been conscious, when he says, "God forbid I should ever see her play it—it would tear my nerves to tatters." Who could have borne to listen to—

> "Here, mother! tie
> This girdle for me—and bind up this hair
> In any simple knot. Aye! that does well—
> And yours I see is coming down. How often
> Have we done this for one another, now
> We shall not do it any more."

The play was so disfigured by the mistakes that had crept into it in the London edition, that he reprinted it at Leghorn, and sent me a copy, which I received in Switzerland.

Mrs. Shelley says, "it is to be lamented that he did not employ himself on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, and leave the delineation of human passion, which he could depict in such an able manner, for fantastic creations, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments with regard to human nature, and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master-passion of his soul." I cannot agree with her. It would have been a vain attempt to turn his mind from the bent of its natural inclinations. He told me, that it was with the greatest possible effort, and struggle with himself, that he could be brought to write the Cenci; and great as is that tragedy, his fame must rest not on it, but on his mighty Rhymes, the deep-felt inspiration of his Choral Melodies. I shall hereafter have to speak of his Charles I., which at the earnest request of others he commenced, but which nothing could so far conquer his repugnance as to accomplish.

The Shelleys suffered a severe affliction at Rome, by the death of their son William. His love, and regret for the loss of this child, may be seen by a fragment which he epigraphs with "*Roma, Roma, Roma, non e piu come era prima;*" and he alludes to this interesting boy in the Cenci.—

"That fair blue-eyed child,
Who was the loadstar of our life—
All see since his most piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth and time,
And all the things hoped for and done therein,
Are changed to you through your exceeding grief."

Rome was, as he says, become no longer Rome to him, and he was anxious to escape a spot associated too intimately with his child's presence and loss. Some friends of theirs being resident in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, they took a small house, Villa Valsavanò, about half way between that town and Monte Nero, where they remained during the summer. Mrs. Shelley gives a very interesting picture of the manner of life and study which her husband pursued at this villa, where he put a finishing hand to the Cenci, and studied Calderon, from whose El Purgatorio de San Patricio, the description of the mountain pass, where the murder was to have been committed—(none could be more adapted for such a purpose) was taken.

The poet, in the latter part of the year, migrated to Florence. Here, after his severe mental sufferings, though his physical ones were unabated, he enjoyed some repose, and luxuriated in the divine creations of Grecian art.

He was a constant visitor to the Uffizii gallery. Schiller has left us, in the *Brief eines residentes Danes*, a sketch, and a valuable one, of many antiques. "An invisible hand," he says, "lifts the veil of the past, and thou standest in the midst of smiling, beautiful Greece, and wanderest among bowers and groves, and worshippest, as it, the Gods of romance." But the German poet's descriptions of the Niobe and the Apollo, and the Dancing Faun, and the Medician Venus, are pale and lifeless, compared with those which may be found in Shelley's Posthumous Works. But there are two groups which Mrs. Shelley has omitted in her Work of Love, and which I shall give in his own words—premising them by saying that these notes were written in pencil, and thrown off in the gallery, in a burst of enthusiasm, proving that thoughts struck out in the fire of the moment, have a more inherent force of truth—give birth to a natural eloquence that defies all that study and after meditation can produce.

Of the Laocoon he says,—"The subject of the Laocoon is a disagreeable one, but whether we consider the grouping, or the execution, nothing that remains to us of antiquity can surpass it. It consists of a father and his two sons. Byron thinks that Laocoon's anguish is absorbed in that of his children, that a mortal's agony is blending with an immortal's patience. Not so. Intense physical suffering, against which he pleads with an upraised countenance of despair, and appeals with a sense of its injustice, seems the predominant and overwhelming emotion, and yet there is a nobleness in the expression, and a majesty that dignifies torture.

We now come to his children. Their features and attitudes indicate the excess of the filial love and devotion that animates them, and swallows up all other feelings. In the elder of the two, this is particularly observable. His eyes are fixedly bent on Laocoon—his whole soul is with—is a part of that of his father. His arm extended towards him, not for protection, but from a wish as if instinctively to afford it, absolutely speaks. Nothing can be more exquisite than the contour of his form and face, and the moulding of his lips, that are half open, as if in the act of —not uttering any unbecoming complaint, or prayer or lamentation, which he is conscious are alike useless—but addressing words of consolatory tenderness to his unfortunate parent. The intensity of his bodily torments is only expressed by the uplifting of his right foot, which he is vainly and impotently attempting to extricate from the grasp of the mighty folds in which it is entangled.

In the younger child, surprise, pain, and grief seem to contend for mastery. He is not yet arrived at an age when his mind has sufficient self-possession, or fixedness of reason, to analyse the calamity that is overwhelming himself and all that is dear to him. He is sick with pain and horror. We almost seem to hear his shrieks. His left hand is on the head of the snake, that is burying its fangs in his side, and the vain and fruitless attempt he is making to disengage it, increases the effect. Every limb, every muscle, every vein of Laocoon expresses, with the fidelity of life, the working of the poison, and the strained girding round of the inextricable folds, whose tangling sinuosities are too numerous and complicated to be followed. No chisel has ever displayed with such anatomical fidelity and force, the projecting muscles of the arm, whose hand clenches the neck of the reptile, almost to strangulation, and the mouth of the enormous asp, and his terrible fangs widely displayed, in a moment to penetrate and meet within its victim's heart, make the spectator of this miracle of sculpture, turn away with shuddering and awe, and doubt the reality of what he sees."

Not less charming are Shelley's remarks on the group of the Bacchus and Ampelus in the same gallery.

"Look! the figures are walking as it were with a sauntering and idle pace, and talking to each other as they walk, and this is expressed in the motion of their delicate and glowing forms. One arm of Bacchus rests with its entire weight on the shoulder of Ampelus, the other, the fingers being gently curved, as with the living spirit that animates the flexible joints, is gracefully thrown forward to correspond with the advance of the opposite leg. He has sandals, and buskins clasped with two serpents' heads, and his leg is cinctured with their skins. He is crowned with vine-leaves, laden with their crude fruit, and the crisp leaves hang with the inertness of a faded leaf over his neck and massy, profuse, downhanging hair, which gracefully divided on his forehead, falls in delicate wreaths on each side his neck, and curls upon the breast. Ampelus, with a young lion's or lynx's skin over his shoulders, holds a cup in his right hand, and with his left half encircles Bacchus, as you may have seen a younger and an elder boy at school, walking in some grassy spot of the playground, with that tender friendship for each other that the age inspires. The countenance of Bacchus is sublimely sweet and lovely, taking a shade of gentle and playful tenderness from the arch looks of Ampelus, whose cheerful face turned towards him, expresses the suggestion of some droll and merry device. It has a divine and supernatural beauty, as one who walks through the world untouched by its corrupting cares. It looks like one who unconsciously confers pleasure and peace. The countenance of Ampilus is in some respects boyish and inferior, that of Bacchus expresses an imperturbable and godlike self-possession—he seems in the enjoyment of a calm delight, that nothing can destroy. His is immortal beauty."

In this city he saw one of those republics that opposed for some time a systematic and effectual resistance to all the surrounding tyranny of popedom and despotism. "The Lombard League," he says, "defeated the arms of the despot in the field, and until Florence was betrayed into the hands of those polished tyrants the Medici, freedom had one citadel, where it could find refuge from a world that was its foe." To this cause he attributed the undisputed superiority of Italy in literature and the arts, above all its contemporaries; the union and energy and beauty which distinguish from all other poets the writings of Dante; the restlessness of fervid power which surpassed itself in painting and sculpture, and from which Raphael and Michael Angelo drew their inspiration.

It was during his stay in Florence, that he first saw the critique in the Quarterly Review of 1818, on his Laon and Cythna, or a Revolution of the Golden City, a Vision of the Nineteenth Century, as it was first entitled; better known as the Revolt of Islam: a review, be it here said, that has always endeavoured to crush rising talent—never done justice to one individual, whose opinions did not square with its own in religion or politics.

A friend of mine, the late Lord Dillon, mentioned to me an anecdote of Shelley, with reference to the article in question, which is too characteristic to be passed over in silence. His lordship observed at Delesert's reading-room, a young man very earnestly bent over the last Quarterly. It was Shelley, and when he came to the end of the paper, to the irresistibly ludicrous comparison of himself to Pharaoh, where the Crispinus pompously says, " Like the Egyptians of old, the wheels of his chariot are broken, the path of mighty waters closes in from behind, a still deepening ocean is before him, for a short time are seen his impotent struggles against a resistless power, his blasphemous execrations are heard, his despair, but he poorly assumes the tone of triumph and defiance, and he calls ineffectually on others to follow him in the same ruin, finally he sinks *like lead* to be forgotten." When he came to this specimen of bathos, this stick after the explosion of the rocket, Shelley burst into a convulsive laughter, closed the book with an hysteric laugh, and hastily left the room, his Ha! ha's ringing down the stairs.

As the Edinburgh Review was unprophetic as to Byron, its great rival's predictions about Shelley were equally falsified. It has been the crying evil of all times, that early genius has been ever depressed. There is scarcely a great poet from the time of Milton, down to the present day, who has not proved a mark for the invidious malice of his contemporaries. But among all authors of a past or present age, none has been more unjustly handled than Shelley, as this April number before me testifies. If it was written, as Byron supposed, by one who afterwards borrowed most largely from him whom he vituperates, and who has been raised far above his petty standard—elevated on stilts—in the pages of that very *veridical* review which assumes to be the oracle and guide of literature, his depreciation of one whom he feared might one day make him hide his own diminished head, will be more easily intelligible, though the condemnation of his scepticism came with an ill grace from an individual, and that person* a priest, who has since endeavoured in a more systematic way, to sap the very foundations of Christianity, by depriving of its prophetic character, the Old Testament, and resolving all its miracles into the effects of natural causes; for which he was visited, and justly, with the loss of his professorial chair in Divinity. Poetry—at least poetry of so high and metaphysical a kind as that of Shelley—his idealisms of Intellectual Beauty and Universal Love, his Speculations respecting the Misgovernment of the World, and the Causes of the existing Evils in the Institutions of Society, however founded on his own construction of the Necessity of a Change—A Revolt of Islam—were, as the reviewer himself confesses, harmless; for he admits, "that of all his brethren, Mr. Shelley carries to the greatest length the doctrines of his sect," and he adds, "that he is, from this, and other reasons, by far the least pernicious of them, indeed that there is a *naiveté* and an openness in his manner of laying down the most extraordinary positions, which in some degree deprive them of their venom; and when he enlarges on what are but necessary results of systems more gradually detailed by others, he might almost be mistaken for an *artful advocate of civil order and religious institutions.*"

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* An anonymous libeller in Blackwood, who signs himself "Hanoveriensis," (*quære* John Cam Hobhouse,) says, "He (Lord Byron) represents Milman as the author on Shelley in the Quarterly Review. *This must be a vague guess* of Captain Medwin's, for Lord Byron knew from the best authority, that it was written by a nephew of Coleridge." This is one of Hobhouse's knock-me-down assertions, and probably as false as most of them. Did he never see the Don Juan expunged stanzas, about "a priest almost a priest"? Lord Byron frequently expressed to Shelley and myself a different conviction. How much, if Hobhouse is right about the paternity, must the great Coleridge have blushed at his degenerate relative!

And yet, with this admission of the uninjurious tendency of this poem, and the unwillingly extorted admission of its beauty, he endeavours to persuade himself that it can never become popular, on the ground that its merits and faults equally conspire against it, for it *has not much ribaldry or voluptuousness for prurient imaginations, and no personal scandal for the malicious.* High merits, at all events. But it is clear that The Divine is not quite satisfied in his own mind, that his leaden shafts will be effectual to crush his formidable rival, and thinks the most effectual way of preventing his book from getting into the hands of readers, is to calumniate the man—and no one knew him less; to begin by saying, " He was a very vain man, that his speculations and disappointments began in early childhood, and that even from that period he carried about with him a soured and discontented spirit—in boyhood unamiable, in youth querulous, and unmanly in manhood. Singularly unhappy in all three." Adding, " He speaks of his school as a world of woes, of his masters as tyrants, of his schoolfellows as enemies. Alas!

what is this but to bear evidence against himself? Every one who knows what a public school must be, will only trace in these lines an insubordinate, a vain, and mortified spirit."

If there be any fidelity in the picture which I have drawn of Shelley, from his childhood through his boyhood, and up to his manhood, the falsehood of this summing up of his character will be self-apparent. Shelley does not so much speak of the public school of Eton, when he alludes to his world of woes, tyrants and enemies, but of another establishment. He never carried about with him a soured or discontented spirit. His melancholy was that of meditation and abstraction, not misanthropy. He was not unteachable as a boy, or how did he acquire his knowledge; he was not unamiable, no boy was ever more affectionate; and although he entered into no manly sports, from the delicacy of his constitution, no one was more playful and sportive; nor was he querulous and unmanly in manhood.

As Æschylus makes Prometheus pathetically say,—

> "'Tis easy
> For one whose path of life is free from cares
> And sorrows, to give counsel, and find words
> Of sharp reproof to tax with evil those
> Who walk in misery."

It is a passage I have often heard him quote, on realising the evil augury, that in his seventeenth year inspired the following lines:—

> "'Tis mournful when the deadliest hate
> Of friends and fortune and of fate,
> Is levelled at one fated head."

His first ill-assorted and ill-judged marriage brought with it miseries, and left behind it wounds, that smarted indeed, but never festered his spirit. Misery was to him a crucible for purifying the ore of humanity. It begat in him a more exceeding love for all that was lovely—an universal philanthropy. Even for the author ot this unworthy and disgraceful lampoon, he entertained no hatred, and says in some lines addressed to the reviewer,—

> " Alas! good friend, what profit can you see,
> In hating such a hateless thing as me?
> There is no spirit in hate, when all the rage
> Is on one side—in vain would you assuage
> Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
> In which not even contempt lurks," &c.

And in other stanzas, entitled "To a Critic," he ends with—

> " I hate the want of truth and love—
> How should I then hate thee!"

How forcibly does Shelley remind us of Plato, who when written to by Dionysius to spare him,—that Dionysius who had sold him for a slave, replied, that he had no time to think of Dionysius.

To the effect of this attack on Shelley's life and propects, I shall hereafter allude. Its venom was scattered far and wide. It worked well. The detractor knew what he was about. The moral

English public are apt to associate the man with his works; and the consequence was, that this sublime poem, published at Shelley's own expense, fell almost still-born from the press.

On the eve of my departure from Bombay, in October 1818, I met in the bazaar, at a Parsee book-stall, with a copy of the Revolt of Islam. It had been shipped with other unsaleable literary commodities—for it is the habit of the purchasers at the trade sales, to send out such wares to the colonies,—and I purchased it for little more than its value in waste paper, with which it was its fate to line many a trunk, and furnish wrappers for the grocer. Young men on quitting school and college, lead a life of so much adventure, are so much absorbed in the pursuits and occupations of active life, that they know not till some circumstance brings back the past, how much regard they entertain for each other. I had, it is true, heard of the result of his first unhappy marriage, but his second union was new to me, and the Introduction, full of beauty and feeling, and the allusions in it to his school life, reawakened my sympathies, and revived all my dormant affections. But if I yearned to see him again, and anticipated the period of our meeting once more with delight, I was astonished at the greatness of his genius, and made the volume the companion of my journey, delighting to trace in it the elements of his young mind down to their complete development, as in a chart we love to follow the course of some river whose source we have visited. On my return he was the first person I wrote to, and found that he had not forgotten the companion of his boyhood. His letters breathed the same warmth of regard which he had ever entertained for me, and they contained an invitation to visit him at Florence, where I at first addressed him, he having quitted England little more than a year before I landed at Liverpool. How much do I regret the loss of these letters!

I will beg the reader to excuse this extraneous matter, and take up the thread of Shelley's wanderings—returning to Florence, where he passed the autumn and part of the winter of 1819.

Florence the magnificent, with its fortressed palaces—its Piazza Vecchia, crowded with statues, its Santa Croce, and Cascine and Gardens, and splendid galleries, realized all Shelley's dreams; and here probably he would have taken up his permanent residence, but for the climate, which he considered highly detrimental to his health. Those who know that city, will have experienced the keen, dry, piercing winds, that sweep down from the Apennines, interpenetrate, and pierce like a sword through the system, tearing every house to tatters. They acted on Shelley's sensitive frame most prejudicially.

On the 25th of January, having completed a third act to his Prometheus, and written his Ode to the West Wind, and the sublime stanzas on the Medusa shield, he embarked for Pisa,—a most original way of making the journey, which by the tortuous Arno must have been very slow and tedious. His love of boating, however, prevailed over considerations of comfort in travelling, and he thought that, suffering as he was from his complaint, he could better bear the motion of a boat, than of a carriage, and he anticipated, even at that season, "the delights of the sky, the river, and the mountains."

His first impression of Pisa, as appears by one of his letters, was not very favourable, but it being in a hollow, and sheltered from the Tramontana, he found so great a relief, that he decided to make it hereafter his winter place of abode. Another inducement was the water—the best in Italy, which is brought from the mountains by an aqueduct, whose long line of arches reminded him of the Campagna.

In the spring he stopped a week or two near Leghorn, with his friends the Gisbornes, and it was on a beautiful evening, while wandering among the lanes, where myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that he heard the carolling of the skylark, which inspired one of his most beautiful poems.

They spent the summer at the baths of St. Julien, four miles from Pisa, at the foot of the mountains, which Dante says—

> "I Pisan veder Lucca non ponno."

I shall now bring myself in near contact with him, hoping to be excused any autobiographical matter that may creep into my narrative.

END OF VOL. I.

APPENDIX.

[No. 1.]

Monday, July 18, 1803.

Miss Kate,
Horsham,
Sussex.

Free. P. B. Shelley.

Dear Kate,—We have proposed a day at the pond next Wednesday, and if you will come to-morrow morning I would be much obliged to you, and if you could any how bring Tom over to stay all the night, I would thank you. We are to have a cold dinner over at the pond, and come home to eat a bit of roast chicken and peas at about nine o'clock. Mama depends upon your bringing Tom over to-morrow, and if you don't we shall be very much disappointed. Tell the bearer not to forget to bring me a fairing, which is some gingerbread, sweetmeat, hunting-nuts, and a pocket-book. Now I end.

I am not

Your obedient servant,

P. B. Shelley.

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[No. 2.]

Dear Sir,—I understand that to obviate future difficulties, I ought now to make marriage settlements. I entrust this to your management, if you will be kind enough to take the matter in hand. In the course of three weeks or a month, I shall take the precaution of being remarried, before which I believe these adjustments will be necessary. I wish the sum settled on my wife in case of my death to be £700 per annum. The maiden name is Harriett Westbrook with two T's—Harriett. Will you be so kind as to address me at Mr. Westbrook's, 23, Chapel-street, Grosvenor-square? We most probably go to London to-morrow. We shall see Whitton, when I shall neither forget your good advice, nor cease to be grateful for it. With kind remembrances to your family,

Yours most gratefully,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Cuckfield, Oct. 21, 1811.

To T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham.

[No. 3.]

Keswick, Cumberland.
Nov. 26, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—We are now in this lovely spot, where for a time we have fixed our residence. The rent of our cottage, furnished, is £1 10s. per week. We do not intend to take up our abode here for a perpetuity, but should wish to have a house in Sussex. Perhaps you would look out for us. Let it be in some picturesque, retired place—St. Leonard's Forest, for instance. Let it not be nearer to London than Horsham, nor near any *populous* manufacturing town. We do not covet either a propinquity to *barracks*. Is there any possible method of raising money without exorbitant interest until my coming of age? I hear that you and my father have had a rencontre. I was surprised that he dared to attack you, but men always hate those whom they have injured; this hatred was, I suppose, a stimulant which supplied the want of courage. Whitton has written to me to state the impropriety of my letter to my mother and sister; this letter I have returned, with a passing remark on the back of it. I find that affair on which those letters spoke is become the general gossip of the idle newsmongers of Horsham. They give me credit of having invented it. They do my invention much honour, but greatly discredit their own penetration.

My kind remembrances to all friends, believe me, dear sir,

Yours most truly,

P. B. SHELLEY.

We dine with the Duke of N. at Graystock this week.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex.

[No. 4.]

Keswick, Cumberland,
Nov. 30, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—When I last saw you, you mentioned the possibility, alluding at the same time to the imprudence, of raising money even at my present age, at seven per cent. *We are now so poor as to be actually in danger of every day being deprived of the necessaries of life.* In two years, you hinted that I could obtain money at legal interest. My poverty, and not my will consents (as Romeo's apothecary says), when I request you to tell me the readiest method of obtaining this. I could repay the principal and interest, on my coming of age, with very little detriment to my ultimate expectations. In case you see obvious methods of effecting this, I would thank you to remit me a small sum for immediate expenses; if not, on no account do so, as some degree of hazard must attend all my acts, under age, and I am resolved never again to expose you to suffer for my imprudence. Mr. Westbrook *has sent me a small sum, with an intimation, that we are to expect no more;* this suffices for the immediate discharge of a few debts; and it is nearly with our very last guinea, that we visit the Duke of N., at Graystock, to-morrow. We return to Keswick on Wednesday. I have very few hopes from this visit. That reception into Abraham's bosom appeared to me to be the consequence of some infamous concessions, which are, I suppose, synonymous with duty.—Love to all.

My dear Sir,
Yours most truly,
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex.

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[No. 5.]

Dublin, No. 17, Grafton Street,
March 20th, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,—The tumult of business and travelling has prevented my addressing you before.

I am now engaged with a literary friend in the publication of a voluminous History of Ireland, of which two hundred and fifty pages are already printed, and for the completion of which, I wish to raise two hundred and fifty pounds. I could obtain undeniable security for its payment at the expiration of eighteen months. Can you tell me how I ought to proceed? *The work* will produce great profits. As you will see by the Lewes paper, I am in the midst of overwhelming engagements. My kindest regards to all your family. Be assured I shall not forget you or them.

My dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
P. B. Shelley.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex,
England.

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[No. 6.]

Nantgwillt Rhayador, Radnorshire,
April 25th, 1812.

My Dear Sir,—After all my wanderings, I have at length arrived at Nantgwillt, near Mr. T. Groves. I could find no house throughout the north of Wales, and the merest chance has conducted me to this spot. Mr. Hooper, the present proprietor, is a bankrupt, and his assignees are empowered to dispose of the lease, stock, and furniture, which I am anxious to purchase. They will all be taken at a valuation, and Mr. T. Grove has kindly promised to find a proper person to stand on my side. The assignees are willing to give me credit for eighteen months, or longer; but being a minor, my signature is invalid. Would you object to join your name in my bond, or rather, to pledge yourself for my standing by the agreement when I come of age? The sum is likely to be six or seven hundred pounds.

The farm is about two hundred acres, one hundred and thirty acres arable, the rest wood and mountain. The house is a very good one, the rent ninety-eight pounds, which appears abundantly cheap. My dear sir, now pray answer me by return of post, as I am at present in an unpleasant state of suspense with regard to this affair, as so eligible an opportunity for settling in a cheap, retired, romantic spot will scarcely occur again.

Remember me most kindly to all your family.

Yours very truly,

P. B. SHELLEY.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham, Sussex.

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[No. 7.]

[Post-mark, 16th June, 1813.]

Cooke's Hotel, Albemarle Street.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is some time since I have addressed you, but as our interests are interwoven in a certain degree by a community of disappointment, I shall do so now, without ceremony.

I was desirous of seeing you on the subject of the approaching expiration of my minority, but hourly expecting Mrs. Shelley's confinement, I am not able to leave her for the present.

I wished to know whether at that epoch, you would object to see me through the difficulties with which I am surrounded.

You may depend on my grateful remembrance of what you have already done for me, and suffered on my account, whether you consent or refuse to add to the list of my obligations to you. The late negociations between myself and my father have been abruptly broken off by the latter. This I do not regret, as his caprice and intolerance would not have suffered the wound to heal.

I know that I am the heir to large property. Now are the papers to be seen? have you the least doubt but that I am the safe heir to a large landed property? Have you any certain knowledge on the subject?

If you are coming to town soon, I should be most happy to see you; or after Mrs. Shelley's confinement, I will visit you at Horsham.

Mrs. S. unites in her remembrances to all your family.

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. Shelley.

[No. 8.]

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street,
June 21st, 1813.

My Dear Sir,—Mrs. Shelley's confinement may take place in one day, or not until six weeks. In this state of uncertainty, I would unwillingly leave town even for a few hours. I therefore should be happy to see you so soon as you could make a journey to town convenient. Depend upon it, that no artifice of my father's shall seduce me to take a life interest in the estate. I feel with sufficient force, that I should not by such conduct be guilty alone of injustice to myself, but to those who have assisted me by kind offices and advice during my adversity.

Mrs. S. unites with me in best wishes to you and yours.

My dear Sir,
Your very obliged,
Percy B. Shelley.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex.

[No. 9.]

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street,
June 28, 1813.

My Dear Sir,—I am happy to inform you, that Mrs. Shelley has been safely delivered of a little girl, and is now rapidly recovering.

I would not leave her in her present state, and therefore still consider your proposal of fixing the interview in London as the most eligible.

I need not tell you that the sooner I have the pleasure of seeing you, the sooner my mind, and that of my wife, will be relieved from a most unpleasant feeling of embarrassment and uncertainty. You may entirely confide in my secrecy and prudence.

I desire my very best remembrances to all yours, and remain,

My dear Sir,
Very faithfully yours,
P. B. Shelley.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham, Sussex.

[No. 10.]

My dear Sir,—I shall be most happy to see you, at six o'clock, to dinner, to-morrow. I think this plan is the best. Mrs. Shelley unites with me in best remembrances to all your family.

I remain,
Yours very faithfully,
P. B. Shelley.

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street.
July 6, 1813.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham, Sussex.

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